Undoing the Binaries, Rethinking "Encounter": Translation Works of Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Missionaries in China

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I. INTRODUCTION

"Translation is the performative nature of cultural communication."
Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*

It has been a common conception that there exists a fundamental difference between the "East" and the "West." Certain postcolonial writings, such as Edward W. Said's influential *Orientalism* (1978), have reshaped our understanding of encounters between Europeans and non-Westerners as one in which the European Self speaks for and creates its Other, always in a hierarchical, binary relationship. One may well imagine that only recently have we become aware of these power imbalances and begun to engage in productive, cross-cultural dialogue. However, such an understanding limits not only our conception of history, but also reduces the two participants in the interaction to singular, static entities.

The encounter between European Jesuit missionaries and Chinese elites during the mid-sixteenth through late-eighteenth centuries challenges such claims on several counts. First, the Jesuits acknowledged ideological diversity among the Chinese; indeed, religious pluralism was a primary obstacle to their proselytizing efforts. In addition, they often collaborated with Chinese literati, both converts and non-Christians, when producing their texts. Finally, they engaged in such a degree of culture dialogue that it may seem to us that they were ahead of their time. For these reasons, the encounter serves as a useful subject of inquiry regarding the power dynamics involved in cross-cultural dialogue.

Translation, as the "performative nature" of such a dialogue, can yield much insight into cultural interaction. The Jesuit missionaries in China did, in fact, produce a great many texts during the seventeenth century, both in Chinese and in European languages. Thus, in their

capacity as translators, they were important intermediaries because they enabled and initiated interaction. Yet just as "China" and "Europe" are not unchanging entities, neither is translation a static process of finding equivalent terms in another language. Rather, it is dynamic and productive. Examined together, two particular Jesuit translations, the *Tianzhu shiyi* (True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) (1603) and the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Confucius, Philosopher of the Chinese) (1687) shed light on both translation studies and the broader issue of cross-cultural dialogue.

Setting the Parameters

Before we can begin to explore this question, it is first necessary to discuss what is meant by the term "translation." With the emergence of Cultural Studies as a discipline in the late twentieth century, our understanding of translation has both broadened and, at the same time, become more ambiguous. Once regarded as the transfer of "equivalent" linguistic terms across a divide of original and copy, the notion of strict equivalence itself is now recognized as an unattainable and narrow goal. Indeed, "by pretending that we know what translation is, i.e. an operation that involves textual transfer across a binary divide, we tie ourselves up with problems of originality and authenticity, of power and ownership, of dominance and subservience."[1] That the pessimistic view that "every translation is a betrayal,"[2] – that something is always "lost" – arose in response to the quest for equivalence is perhaps not surprising. However, such an analysis denies the productive nature of the translation act. Rather, it is important to examine what types of texts can be understood as translation, the cultural and political factors that affect

[1] Susan Bassnett, "When is a Translation Not a Translation?" *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, ed., (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 27.
[2] Qtd. in John Sallis, "The Hermeneutics of Translation," *Language and Linguisticality in Gadamer's Hermeneutics*, ed. by Lawrence K. Schmidt (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000).

the production and reception of a translation, and the particular role translators play in the translation process.

Although scholars of translation agree that the act is more complex than simple communication, there is no consensus about how best to define translation. As comparative literature scholar Susan Bassnett writes, "the category of 'translation' is vague and unhelpful."[3] Some have proposed alternative conceptions: intercultural transfer and collusion (Susan Bassnett), interpretation and highlighting (Hans-Georg Gadamer), reparation (Gayatri Spivak), transmutation (Roman Jakobson), creative transposition (George Steiner). While all these terms emphasize a particular aspect of translation, such as its productive nature, perhaps the most useful term is André Lefevere's "rewriting," which, he argues, must be understood to include not only translation proper, but also criticism and the work of referencing, with all three working together to construct the final image of a text or writer.[4] Such a conception allows for creativity and interpretation, while acknowledging that the final product depends upon a [textual] original.

Beyond the search for an adequate definition of translation is the question of incommensurability, not *how* one remains faithful to his or her source text, but *if* equivalence of meaning is even possible. Linguistic theory suggests that "no two speakers mean exactly the same thing when they use the same terms,"[5] even when conversing in the same language. If the ability to communicate within the same linguistic framework is questionable, how much more so is any attempt to bridge two distinct languages. This question is crucial in Gadamer's work on hermeneutics, for he posits that understanding is filtered through the medium of language.[6] Although he maintains that speakers always mean more than linguistic terms allow, language is

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[3] Susan Bassnett, "When is a Translation Not a Translation?" *Constructing Cultures*, 38.
[4] André Lefevere, "Acculturating Bertolt Brecht," *Constructing Cultures*, 109, 121.
[5] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (New York: Oxford UP, 1998), 263.
[6] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd Rev. Ed., Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1997), 389.

nevertheless a productive site of communication in which one is "transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were."[7] Translation, as a special, interpretive case of linguistic communication,[8] compounds the problem of incommensurability and, at the same time, opens up new possibilities for engagement and understanding.

Yet translation not only involves linguistic interpretation, but also cultural interpretation, and this is why we must understand the act as more than a transfer of terms. Whether or not translators are conscious of it, they are limited by their own cultural "grid," or set of values, expectations, and signifiers. Translation requires them to negotiate the distance between their grid and that of the target context. Here arises the question of Clifford Geertz's "thick description," the complexity and richness an ethnographer encounters when trying to understand and represent a culture unlike his own. Cultural differences present challenges not only for translators, who must "shuttle" (to borrow Spivak's term) between source and target cultures, but also those who wish to study translation as an intercultural encounter. Indeed,

> a writer does not just write in a vacuum; he or she is the product of a particular culture, of a particular moment in time, and the writing reflects those factors such as race, gender, age, class, and birthplace as well as the stylistic, idiosyncratic features of the individual. Moreover, the material conditions in which the text is produced, sold, marketed and read also have a crucial role to play.[9]

Any study of translation, then, must examine not only the source and translated texts, but also complex factors of historical, societal, and economic context, as well as the identity and goals of the individual translator.

Once we understand that translation involves a dynamic interplay between cultural grids, it becomes productive to conceptualize the act not so much as a "bridge" between two localities, but rather as a new site altogether. Here, the work of postcolonialist scholar Homi K. Bhabha

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[7] *Ibid*., 379.
[8] *Ibid*., 384.
[9] Bassnett, "The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies," *Constructing Cultures*, 136.

illuminates our discussion. Of a migrant's experience, he writes, "The non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures opens up a cultural space – a third space – where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences."[10] Although translators do not necessarily physically relocate, Bhabha's characterization of a migrant, a not quite "One nor the Other but *something else besides, in-between*,"[11] is an apt description for a translator's experience, for he or she is simultaneously immersed in and distanced from both source and target cultural contexts.

Moreover, Bhabha argues that this third space is precisely where productive intercultural encounter takes place. He writes, "These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, in the act of defining the idea of the society itself."[12] For translation studies, we can understand these "new signs of identity" in terms of translator, text, and target culture, for none remains completely what it once was. Translators, as intermediaries, take on new subjectivities, constantly fluctuating as they negotiate the terrain of the third space. They remake a text in a language and cultural grid different from its original so that it takes on fresh meanings and significance in its translated form. On the level of culture, the work of translators often introduces unfamiliar ideas that are absorbed and remade in the receiving audience. Such works frequently take on a life of their own distinct from that of the source material in its original context. In these ways, aspects of both source and target cultures combine to create something new.

Clearly, the act of translation involves more than finding equivalent linguistic terms in source and target languages. Indeed, we have suggested that static "fidelity" is impossible. If a

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[10] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 1994), 312.
[11] *Ibid*., 313, emphasis in original.
[12] *Ibid*., 2.

more nuanced understanding of translation encompasses linguistic interpretation and negotiation of cultural difference, then one can examine the productive nature of the act and the "in-between" position of translators and rewritten texts. Such an understanding is essential for our discussion of interaction fostered by the Jesuits between China and Europe during the seventeenth century.

Historical Context

Because texts are not produced in a vacuum, it is important to understand the historical and cultural background of China and the Jesuit mission during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Throughout this period, mission work in China generally flourished, and there was an unprecedented degree of cultural interaction and dialogue between Chinese and Europeans. A great many scholarly works explore this history[13] upon which the account that follows is based.

The latter part of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) was a period of notable creativity and new ideas. As had been the case for centuries, three belief systems dominated Chinese thought: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism with a great deal of syncretism between them. In other words, the Chinese did not see them as mutually exclusive, but rather as traditions from which one could borrow and blend various tenets without contradiction.

[13] A small sampling inclues: Vincent Cronin, *The Wise Man from the West*, (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1984); George S. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty*, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1962); Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, trans. by Janet Lloyd, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1985); David E. Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology*, Studia Leibnitiana: Supplementa vol. 15. (Stuttgart: Steiner-Verlag, 1985); Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh, ed., *East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773*, (Chicago: Loyola UP, 1988); Arnold H. Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin: The Jesuits at the Court of China*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1942).

Confucianism, tracing its teachings to the textual editor Kongzi, or Confucius[14] (ca. 551-479 BCE), promotes personal and civic values such as filial piety, self-cultivation, education, civil service, and benevolence. Core texts include the *Four Books* (the *Analects, Doctrine of the Mean, Great Learning*, and the *Mencius*) and the *Five Classics* (*Book of Changes, Book of Rites, Book of Poetry*, *Book of History*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*). Buddhism was founded in India around the fifth century BC with the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, but it did not enter China until the second century AD. It esteems virtuous living and achieving spiritual cultivation through the purification of one's mind. The third school, Daoism, is native to China. It traces its beginnings to the *Dao de Jing* (ca. 3-4 century BC), a text attributed to the teacher *Laozi*.

Neo-Confucianism, a school most associated with Zhu Xi (1130-1200), developed out of Confucianism as a response to Buddhist and Daoist influences. Zhu Xi, in the commentary tradition, wrote extensively on the Confucian Classics[15] and codified the Four Books. His interpretation became the basis for the imperial exams.[16] During the late Ming, this commentary tradition continued as an important part of literati (textual) culture. Several movements developed in this period. The goal was not to develop a new philosophy, but rather to uncover the "true" meaning of original Confucian texts.[17]

In Europe, Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 1540. Influenced by Renaissance Humanism and the writings of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, the Jesuits valued education and logical argumentation, and exerted a willingness to spread Christianity throughout the world in accordance with the Pope's wishes. In fact, it is Ignatius of Loyola who first used

[14] For a discussion of both Chinese and European naming of the sage, see Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization* (Durham: Duke UP, 1997), 86-96.
[15] I use this term to refer to ancient Confucian texts, and the Four Books and Five Classics, in particular.
[16] Dune, *Generation of Giants*, 12.
[17] David E. Mungello, *Curious Land*, 56-57.

the word *missio* in the evangelical sense.[18] They envisioned their enterprise as spreading Christianity without necessarily requiring converts to adopt European dress, speech, and social customs.[19]

According to Jesuit belief, the "light" of natural reason was a precursor to Christian belief, and hence the Jesuits were predisposed to accept this natural reason occurring in non-Christian civilizations. Thomas Aquinas, whose works greatly influenced the Jesuits, wrote,

> We must therefore say that, if a man is to know any truth whatsoever, he needs divine help in order that his intellect may be moved to its acts by God. But he does not need a new light added to his natural light in order to know the truth in all things, but only in such things as transcend his natural knowledge. Yet God sometimes instructs men miraculously by grace in matters which can be known through natural reasons, just as he sometimes achieves by miracle things which nature can do.[20]

Not surprisingly, the Jesuits regarded Ancient Greece and Rome as "lost civilizations," cultures that, though pagan, showed considerable proclivity toward belief in the Christian God because of their social organization and ethical teachings.[21] Of all cultures Jesuit missionaries encountered beginning in the sixteenth century, they saw in the Japanese and Chinese the highest capacity to accept Christianity because of their complex and established social structures.[22]

The Jesuit approach to evangelization in East Asia built upon this idea of lost civilizations. The method later developed into what was termed "figurism," or as a modern scholar has labeled it, "native restoration,"[23] and it involved looking for evidence of belief compatible with Christianity in the history of the people being converted. Then, claiming that the

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[18] Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 202. Of course, converts could not retain social customs (polygamy, for example) if they contradicted certain tenets of Christianity.
[19] *Ibid*., 204.
[20] Aquinas, qtd. in Sangkeun Kim, *Strange Names of God: The Missionary Translation of the Divine Name and the Chinese Responses to Matteo Ricci's* Shangti *in Late Ming China, 1583-1644* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), 58.
[21] *Ibid*., 45.
[22] *Ibid*., 57.
[23] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 11.

ancient civilization of the particular area used to have knowledge of the Christian God, the missionaries suggested that Christianity could complete and re-establish the lost tradition. The biblical precedent upon which this approach rested was the Apostle Paul's equation of the Christian God with a Greek "unknown god" in Acts 10.

This method required that the Jesuits immerse themselves in the local culture so they would be better able to perceive and further build upon similarities between native religion and Christianity. This often meant learning the language, adopting styles of dress, and adapting oneself to as many social customs as possible without compromising one's own faith. This method is now commonly referred to as "accommodation." However, this term is only somewhat helpful, for the Jesuits went beyond imitating the cultures in which they established missions.

The most instrumental figure in the founding of the missions in Japan and China was Alessandro Valignano, an Italian who joined the Society of Jesus in 1566 and traveled to Asia in 1573. He later oversaw missions in Japan, China, and India as Visitor. Although he worked most directly in Japan, it is important to discuss his approach to evangelism because it had a significant impact on the development of the Chinese mission. First, he was a strong proponent of "top-down" accommodation: he encouraged missionaries to adopt social customs, learn the local languages, and become established in their foreign residences before attempting to convert large numbers of people. Once the culture no longer viewed Christians and [parts of] Christianity as foreign, the Jesuits could concentrate greater effort on proselytizing. In Japan, Valignano promoted accommodation to Buddhist lifestyle; the fathers in China, after initially presenting themselves as bonzes after Valignano's example, eventually changed their presentation to that of Confucian scholars. More generally, and certainly in China, the missionaries' ultimate goal was

to convert elites and, eventually, the emperor, with the idea that the faith of the most privileged members of society would influence that of the entire nation.[24]

The first Jesuits to establish residence in China were Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610). In the years before they were permitted to move inland in 1583, they studied Chinese language, politics, and culture in Macao.[25] Once in China, Ruggieri and Ricci initially shaved their heads and adopted the lifestyle of Buddhist bonzes, perhaps because Valignano had focused conversion efforts on Buddhists in Japan. Undoubtedly, the Jesuit Fathers noticed similarities between the two religions: Buddhist dress resembled that of Western priests, and some doctrines, such as the immortality of the soul, seemed to be part of both traditions, though only on a superficial level. The Fathers in China were further linked to Buddhism because of a plaque labeling their residence as the "Temple of the Flower of the Saints" (Xian hua si). Though this epithet was intended as a referent to Mary, it was often mistaken as a Buddhist title by local Chinese. This link with Buddhism, in fact, may have helped the early mission in China: Buddhist temples, which their residence was mistaken to be, were at that time centers for socializing, and the missionaries may well have established contacts with Confucian scholars who visited the Temple of the Flower of the Saints.[26]

As Ruggieri and Ricci continued their studies of the Chinese language and Confucian texts, Ricci in particular began to regard [ancient] Confucianism as more compatible with the beliefs and goals of the Jesuit mission. He writes, "I have noted down many terms [in select Confucian writings] and phrases in harmony with our faith, for instance, 'the unity of God,' 'the

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[24] Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu-Kuochen, "Introduction," *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (Tien-chu shih-i)*, by Matteo Ricci (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), 7. Henceforth, Ricci's text will be cited as *TZSY*, an abbreviation of the pinyin title, *Tianzhu shiyi*.
[25] *Ibid*., 5.
[26] Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, 123-26.

immortality of the soul,' 'the glory of the blessed,' and the like."[27] Further, scholar-officials and the Jesuits shared a common interest in education, science, and moral teachings. There is evidence, too, that certain literati, among them Qu Rukui (1549-1611), encouraged the equation of Confucianism and Jesuit teaching and recommended that the missionaries dress as scholars.[28] Undoubtedly, Ricci also recognized the high social status literati enjoyed; if the mission was to thrive and eventually reach the capital in Beijing, it would need the support of government officials.

Due to the structure of the Jesuit order and Catholic Church in general, many missionary activities had to be authorized by the Visitor, Valignano. Thus, the Jesuits in China were not able to adopt Confucian dress until 1595, an event that coincided with a move north to the southern capital of Nanjing. Ricci was instrumental in establishing a firm base for the mission, and in 1601, he established a residence in Beijing. As a direct result of his efforts, three important Chinese literati converted to Christianity: Xu Guangqi (1562-1633), Li Zhizao (1565-1630), and Yang Tingyun (1562-1627). Even before this time, however, Ricci had begun to foster ties with literati. Although Valignano first promoted cultural accommodation in East Asia, Ricci's unique application of the techniques to the Chinese context is sometimes called the "Ricci Method," and is often used synonymously with "Jesuit Accommodation."

The use of technology was one way in which the Jesuits first bridged the cultural gap. Presenting himself as a moral teacher and philosopher instead of a Christian missionary, Ricci appealed to the Confucian sense of self-cultivation and the importance of knowledge. Further, he attracted many scholars with his understanding of science and mathematics. He taught the Chinese mnemonic devices that aided in the memorization of the Chinese classics – an

[27] Qtd. in Lancashire and Hu, "Introduction," 14.
[28] Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, 124-26.

invaluable tool for those taking the civil service examinations – astounding audiences in Nanchang with his ability to recite lines from Confucian texts at random.[29] Also significant were maps, since the Chinese had a great interest in geography but had not traveled extensively outside of their borders. Ricci showed his understanding of Chinese self-perception when he had a map made in the Chinese language, with China, the Middle Kingdom, in the center. His journal, narrated by his contemporary, Nicolas Trigault, reads, "This [placement of China in the center] was more in keeping with their [the Chinese] ideas and it gave them a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction. Really, at that time and in the particular circumstances, one could not have hit upon a discovery more appropriate for disposing this people for the reception of the faith."[30] The Jesuits, under Ricci, also impressed the Chinese with other devices, such as a harpsichord and chiming clock.[31] Presenting the "wonders" of Western learning continued to be part of their approach throughout the height of their mission.

Another stage of Jesuit accommodation at the end of the sixteenth century was textual. The practice of writing itself was a form of accommodation, since it was a common part of a scholar's life. Being educated men, Ruggieri and Ricci no doubt felt a certain affinity for the textual orientation of Chinese scholars. By not only producing texts but using them as the primary means of communication (as opposed to preaching) with the Chinese, the fathers in a way wrote themselves into literati society.

In fact, the flourishing printing business in China was one reason why the Jesuits were so influential. The Chinese had both woodblock and moveable-type printing technologies, but they

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[29] *Ibid*., 129. For a detailed discussion of Ricci's mnemonic teachings, see Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking-Random House, 1984).
[30] Matteo Ricci-Nicolas Trigault, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci: 1583-1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953), 167.
[31] David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter between China and the West, 1500-1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 12.

preferred the former because woodblocks were easily stored and preserved and less susceptible to errors in reprints. It was also less expensive to reprint from woodblocks than moveable-type. Printing reached its height in the mid-seventeenth century, with major printing centers in cities near the Yangzi delta. The low cost and high production rate of books enabled many people to start personal collections of works, and it fostered a general interest in education.[32] Thus, when the Jesuits began producing texts of their own, they had many publishing opportunities that ensured that their works were widely distributed.

The Jesuits were selective in choosing particular Western works for publication in China. Notably, they did not set out to translate the Bible into Chinese. Although some works, such as Ruggieri's work on the lives of the saints, had a religious emphasis, many early Jesuit writings in China addressed morality or Western science. These include Ricci's *Jiaoyou lun* (Treatise on friendship, 1595), a collection of sayings of Western authors, the *Ershiwu yan* (Twenty-five sayings, 1605), a selection of Epictetus's writings, and the *Jihe yuanben* (Elements of Euclid, 1607).[33] The production of these works for a Chinese audience may have been an attempt to foster scholarly interest in Western writers and to equate them with Confucian writers. This method was, at least in some sense, successful: the *Jiaoyou lun* and *Ershiwu yan*, for example, both humanistic in subject matter, were widely read by Chinese scholars during the early years of the seventeenth century.[34]

A final and critical aspect of Jesuit textual accommodation is the way in which they infused a "restorationist" agenda into their writings. As noted above, Ricci perceived similarities between (ancient) Confucian teachings and Christianity and began to think of the two as

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[32] Elman, Benjamin, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 16-17.
[33] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 60.
[34] Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 45.

compatible. Beyond mere complementariness, however, in his *Tianzhu shiyi* (True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) (1603), he presented Christianity as the proper fulfillment of an original Confucianism. He suggested that the ancient Chinese not only followed the ethical teachings contained in the Western canon, but also had knowledge of and worshipped the "true" (that is, Christian) God. This tradition was subsequently lost and corrupted by Buddhist and Daoist influences, and later by Neo-Confucian writers such as Zhu Xi.

Ricci then proposed a reexamination of early Confucian writings apart from many of the later commentaries, suggesting to his audience that this would naturally reveal the ways in which Christianity "completes" Confucian ethical belief. In fact, Ricci's idea of a return to early writings was not altogether foreign to Chinese literati, though his assertions about Christianity certainly were. The Donglin movement near the end of the sixteenth century proposed a reworking of influential Neo-Confucian commentaries like Zhu Xi's and called for a return to a "purer" understanding of the classics. Ricci and some of his successors recognized this as a native precedent to the Jesuits' own figurist approach. [35] Jesuits were thus encouraged to enter the on-going debate about the correct interpretation of early Confucian writings and to posit Christianity as the natural and even intended fulfillment of Confucianism.

Throughout their mission in China, the Jesuits not only wrote for the Chinese, but also for Europeans. In fact, Ricci in particular was responsible for introducing systematic discussions of Chinese life to Europe, although most of these writings were published posthumously. He composed a manuscript vocabulary of Chinese in the mid-1580s and a more comprehensive dictionary in 1599-1600 that included Chinese characters, Portuguese, Italian Romanization, and at least the start of an Italian translation. In addition, by the end of 1593, he had translated the

[35] Albert Chan, "Late Ming Society and the Jesuit Missionaries," *East Meets West:The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773,* Ed. by Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh, (Chicago: Loyola UP, 1988), 155-57.

Confucian Four Books into Latin, intending both to help newly-arrived Jesuits learn Chinese and to send a copy to Europe. Although later Jesuit writings note that a copy had been shipped to Europe, no manuscript of Ricci's translation is extant.[36] Finally, near the end of his life, Ricci finished his *Storia dell' Introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina*, an Italian work of ethnography that was posthumously published in Latin (with significant alterations[37]) by Nicolas Trigault, a later Jesuit missionary in China, as *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas* in 1615.[38] The text is now widely available in many languages, including English.[39]

In mid- to late-seventeenth century Europe, scholars and elites were becoming more interested in non-Western areas, especially East Asia. Travel literature had fostered an interest in things foreign, and missionaries, with their first-hand experience in other regions of the world, became esteemed as ethnographic experts. It was during this period that the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687) was published in Latin.[40] Many Jesuits in China collaborated on this translation project of three of the Confucian *Four Books* (namely, the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Analects*).

Because they had cultivated friendships with and gained the respect of prominent officials, many of Ricci's Jesuit successors enjoyed favor at the imperial court. Indeed, this patronage lasted throughout most of the seventeenth century, even after the Manchus assumed power, heralding the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Jesuit influence was declining, though they were not expelled from China for several decades afterward. Since the early seventeenth century, there had been debates among

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[36] Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, (Winchester, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 10-12.
[37] *Ibid.*, 47-48.
[38] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 63 and n. 85.
[39] The English incarnation, translated from Trigault's Latin by Louis J. Gallagher, is entitled somewhat misleadingly, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matteo Ricci: 1583-1610*. The work is more a commentary than a journal. See Rule, pp. 10-11.
[40] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 119.

Europeans regarding both the use of a native Chinese term, *Shangdi*, for the Christian God and the Chinese custom of venerating Confucius and one's ancestors. However, those controversies came to a head nearly one hundred years later in what became known as the Chinese Rites Controversy. The evolution of this debate reflects the religious and intellectual climate in Europe during the Reformation and Counter Reformation. Historian Stephen Toulmin posits that ther was a fundamental change from humanism to rationalism in the seventeenth century. Sixteenth-century theology had been more open to interpretation, but following the Thirty Years War, papal oversight of religious affairs increased as the "certainty" of teaching, religious included, became more important.[41] This was likely a reason why debates over proper behavior for Christian converts in China escalated as the seventeenth century progressed. Finally, in 1715, Pope Clement XI issued a decree banning the use of *Shangdi* to refer to God in the Chinese language and banning Chinese Christians from venerating their ancestors. A few years later in 1721, the Chinese emperor Kangxi countered with his own decree against Christian missionaries.[42]

Goals of the Study

Although scholars of both Chinese history and mission studies have written a great deal about the encounter between the Jesuits and Chinese from the late-sixteenth through late-eighteenth centuries, few scholars have examined Jesuit writings through the lens of translation studies. Nor has there been much comparison of Jesuit texts produced for the Chinese with those written for a European audience.

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[41] Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, (New York: Free Press-MacMillan, 1990), 70.
[42] The text of both of these decrees can be found in Dan J. Li, trans., *China in Transition, 1517-1911*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co, 1969) on pp. 22-24 and 22, respectively.

It is my aim in the present study to examine two works: Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* and the joint translation project of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. An assessment of the two together is productive for several reasons. First, both had a demonstrable impact on respective audiences (China and Europe), and each enjoyed multiple printings. Second, the texts are genealogically related to each other, for the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* sets out explicitly some of the accommodative claims Ricci had proposed nearly eighty years earlier in his *Tianzhu shiyi*. In fact, we can even view the former as a form of reciprocal accommodation. Despite their similarities, their authors nevertheless had very different goals, which affected how each text was created and received.

In order to elucidate our understanding of translation, I distinguish "linguistic" from "cultural" translation. Linguistic translation refers to what one typically associates with translation proper, that is, the act of communicating in one language what is said or written in another. However, we must understand that linguistic translation cannot be separated from cultural translation, in the broader sense of re-presenting aspects of one society or cultural context. Indeed, linguistic translation is but one strategy of cultural translation.

Chapter 2 examines Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*. This may seem a strange choice, for the work does not fit the criteria of translation proper: Ricci wrote it in his audience's language (Chinese), and he was not trying to reproduce a source text. Nevertheless, the *Tianzhu shiyi* offers insights into both linguistic and cultural translation. Although one may claim that Ricci's work was an "original," he nevertheless still had to translate concepts and specific terms into Chinese. Some of these choices, such as words he employed for the Christian God, became a source of contention among both Jesuits and Chinese. In addition, Ricci's work is an important piece of Jesuit writing because it is, in a sense, a textual incarnation of Jesuit accommodation.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, a direct descendant of Ricci's early projects. Not only did the authors inherit Ricci's 1595 translation of the Confucian *Four Books*, but they also pushed his creation of a Chinese-Christian hybrid history further. As with Ricci's text, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* does not fit the description of translation proper, at least not entirely. The supplemental materials that compose a third of the volume play a very important role both in the way the Jesuit contributors carried out their accommodative interpretations and how the text was received by Europeans.

By examining these two works side by side, it is my aim not only to offer perspective on the changing nature of the Jesuit accommodation policy during the seventeenth century, but also to expand and explore the notion of "translation," both as an act and as a subject of academic inquiry. I will argue that the specific examples from seventeenth-century Jesuit-Chinese history show clearly many factors that affect the way a (translated) text is produced and received. Such factors include the goals of the translators, the ways in which they respond to their intended audience, supplemental materials, and the specific strategies they employ. Finally, I will tie both the Jesuit cases and the discussion of translation studies to the broader issue of intercultural communication. I will discuss how the current study supports and challenges notions of Self and Other and suggest that communication, whether or not through translation, should be understood to possess productive and dynamic potential.

II. JOURNEY:

MATTEO RICCI'S *TIANZHU SHIYI* AND THE BEGINNING OF A CONFUCIAN-CHRISTIAN COMPLEMENTARITY

Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* (The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) (1603) is an important text for several reasons. It was widely circulated during the seventeenth century, and has continued to be published well into the twentieth century in several languages.[43] In many ways, we can understand it as a textual embodiment of the Jesuit-Chinese encounter, both reflecting the shift in esteem from Buddhism to Confucianism and the official stance of the Vatican to accommodation in general. The links Ricci makes in the text between ancient Chinese history and Western and Christian history had an enduring effect on the way future generations of missionaries approached the Chinese context.

Before we can begin to evaluate the *Tianzhu shiyi*, it is necessary to understand the factors that shaped its development. Michele Ruggieri's earlier "catechism" entitled *Tianzhu shilu* (True Record of the Lord of Heaven) (1584) formed an important precedent. Ricci's work undoubtedly developed out of Ruggieri's; indeed, Valignano commissioned Ricci to write the *Tianzhu shiyi* to replace the *Tianzhu shilu* because the earlier text was lacking in style and drew too heavily on Buddhist traditions.

Published in November 1584, Ruggieri's *Tianzhu shilu* resembles the format of Ricci's work, but there are marked differences between the two. Ruggieri first composed the work in Latin and called it *Vera et brevis divinarum rerum expositio*. Once he had translated it into Chinese, it became the first work written by a Westerner to be printed in China with woodblock technology. The work had an initial printing of 1200 copies and, later, an additional 3000.[44]

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[43] Lancashire and Hu, "Introduction," *TZSY*, 12.
[44] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 71, 323 n. 100.

Although Ruggieri, like Ricci, wrote his work in the form of a dialogue, its content is more sympathetic and accommodative to Buddhism. For example, in the first edition, Ruggieri utilizes many Buddhist terms, such as *Seng* and *Heshang* (monk) for "Christian priest,"[45] and he referred to the Jesuit fathers as "bonzes."[46] Perhaps most importantly, his term designating the Christian God: *Tianzhu*, or "Master of Heaven," also had Buddhist overtones. Ricci, commenting on the early use of this term, writes,

> The missionaries always used the title *T'ien-chu* [*Tianzhu*], meaning Lord of Heaven. They could hardly have chosen a more appropriate expression, because there is no consonant sound of D in the Chinese language,[47] and to them there was something magnificent and a touch of the divine in this particular name. In fact, this title, first used at the beginning of our missionary work, is still in vogue today when God is mentioned in discourse and in writing.[48]

This term did initially lead some Chinese to confuse the Jesuits with Buddhists, but the Jesuits continued to use *Tianzhu* to denote God,[49] whereas other Buddhist terms in Ruggieri's *Tianzhu shilu* were replaced in subsequent editions of the text. One possible explanation for this continuity is that, although *Tianzhu* was the name of a Buddhist deity, by Ricci's time, it had gained currency as a Daoist term as well. Perhaps the Jesuits preferred this word because it could appeal to several traditions simultaneously.

Another notable feature of the *Tianzhu shilu* is the degree to which it addresses and promotes Christian principles. The work relates the biblical account of the creation of the world, discusses baptism, and includes the Ten Commandments. Ruggieri recounts Jesus Christ's crucifixion and states that Christians must follow a monogamous lifestyle. Because of these

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[45] Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 144.
[46] Rule, *K'ung-tze or Confucius?*, 32.
[47] It is not clear what Ricci means here, for there is a "D" sound in Chinese. Further, at least once he transliterates the Latin *Deus* as *Dousi*. See page 25 in this chapter.
[48] Qtd. in Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 146.
[49] The Catholic Church, in fact, continues to use the term *Tianzhu* for "God" in modern times. See Rule, *K'ung-tze or Confucius?*, 8.

straightforward statements of Christian belief and conduct, Jesuit scholar Paul Rule calls the *Tianzhu shilu* an exposition of doctrine instead of a catechism.[50]

Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* clearly draws on Ruggieri's work, but it differs in significant ways. Notably, Ricci wrote his work directly in the Chinese language instead of translating it from a Latin composition. Because his language skills were more advanced, his treatise is stylistically more refined than Ruggieri's. Even more significant is the shift away from Buddhism toward Confucianism, as well as the omission of prominent Christian teachings. The decidedly pro-Confucian and anti-Buddhist and –Daoist strains in the *Tianzhu shiyi* no doubt reflect the changing Jesuit attitudes toward the various ideological systems in China at that time.

Although there have been many studies of Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*, few scholars agree on how to categorize this important work. Several label it a catechism; others, a work of apologetics. However, overt Christian theology appears only in the eighth and final chapter of the work, prompting the translators of the English edition to call it a "pre-evangelical dialogue,"[51] a work that appeals not directly to Christian doctrine, but rather to logic, a capacity that all humans possess. Indeed, of his *Tianzhu shiyi*, Ricci writes,

> This does not treat of all the mysteries of our holy faith, which need be explained only to catechumens and Christians, but only of certain principles, especially such as can be proven and understood with the light of natural reason. Thus it can be of service both to Christians and to non-Christians and can be understood in those remote regions which our Fathers cannot immediately reach, preparing the way for those other mysteries which depend upon faith and revealed wisdom.[52]

Rather than write directly about Christianity, Ricci crafted his work as a discussion between a Western scholar and Chinese scholar in which the two debate such issues as the existence of God and what it means to live virtuously. Setting the groundwork for the Jesuit practice that became

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[50] *Ibid.*, 8.
[51] Lancashire and Hu, "Introduction," *TZSY*, 15.
[52] Qtd. in Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 96-97.

known as Figurism, Ricci attempts to restore to the Chinese the "true" meaning of their ancient [Confucian] writings. The text argues that Buddhist and Daoist influences have corrupted Confucianism as it existed in its ancient, pure form, and that the Western scholar's teachings (Christianity) complement Confucianism in such a way that they not only illuminate the original meaning of the Chinese belief system, but in fact are the logical completion of it.

Ricci began writing the *Tianzhu shiyi* in 1593 or 1594, at the urging of Valignano. By this time, Ricci had lived in China and studied the language and customs for over a decade. In 1591, he had commenced a translation of the Confucian Four Books, and it was during this period that he began to view Confucianism as a more natural and practical avenue of accommodation than Buddhism. A year after the authorization to dress as Confucians was in place, Ricci completed a draft of the *Tianzhu shiyi* in 1596 and sent it to his superiors and to the Inquisition at Goa for approval. In the interim, until the draft was approved for publication in 1601, Ricci circulated manuscript copies among his Chinese literati friends and incorporated their constructive criticisms. At the same time, he conversed with several prominent Buddhists, among them, Sanhuai Hong'en (1545-1608), one of the most well-known monks of that period. From these debates, he better understood Buddhist opposition to Christianity, and the insights he gained sharpened his arguments in the *Tianzhu shiyi*. Finally, he wrote the introduction and prepared the entire text for publication in 1603. Two hundred copies of this first edition were published in Beijing. Two more printings followed in Ricci's lifetime: one in 1605 in Canton, and another, which included a preface by an important convert Li Zhizao (1565-1630), in 1607, in Hangzhou by the Yanyi Pavilion. Subsequent editions continued to be published throughout the seventeenth century and beyond.[53] It is difficult to determine how many copies of the *Tianzhu shiyi* were

[53] Lancashire and Hu provide this and more detailed information in their Introduction to their English translation of Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*, pp. 10-21.

produced in the early seventeenth century, but given the text's wide readership and its greater influence relative to the *Tianzhu shilu,* it is likely that numerous copies were published and circulated during this time.

The treatise itself consists of an introduction and eight chapters. Ricci, through the voice of the "Western scholar," states early in the text that the discussion "will be based solely on reason."[54] With logical reasoning as the guiding principle of their conversation, the scholars decide that God exists and has certain attributes such as an eternal nature, and that he alone can be the source of created things. The concepts of Daoist "Nothingness" and the Buddhist "Void" as well as the Neo-Confucian "Supreme Ultimate" and "Principle" are not adequate explanations for the source of all things. Next, the scholars discuss the conditions of humans: they are distinct from other animals, spirits, and God, and their purpose on earth is to cultivate the Way to gain and enjoy eternal life. In this section, Ricci introduces the Aristotelian concepts of vegetative, sensitive, and spiritual souls. The discussion then moves on to a refutation of specific Buddhist tenets, namely, the belief in reincarnation and the prohibition against killing animals. Next, the scholars converse about virtue, the motivation for living a good life, the existence of Heaven and Hell, and the nature of punishment and reward. Finally, the last chapter briefly introduces specific Christian beliefs: the Creation and Fall of Man; Jesus, God's son, as the savior of mankind; the spread of the Gospel; and the necessity of receiving baptism to enter the church.

Forging the Connection: Aspects of Translation

As noted in the introduction, the *Tianzhu shiyi* does not fit the criteria of strict translation, for Matteo Ricci wrote it directly in Chinese and did not draw on one particular textual source.

[54] Ricci, *TZSY,* 71.

Nevertheless, it is important for our discussion both because the author employs translation strategies as related to specific terms and phrases, and because he (re)presents Confucianism in a genealogic relationship with Christianity. The reactions of both Europeans and Chinese to these linguistic and cultural translation strategies illuminate not only the precariousness of accommodation, but also the influence such a text can have in initiating cross-cultural dialogue.

Both Ricci's manifold aims in writing the *Tianzhu shiyi* and the ideological climate of his audience required that he adopt certain translation strategies. André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett list four possible goals of texts, always working together in some combination: to convey information, to entertain, to persuade, and to become part of cultural capital. Typically, one of these predominates and shapes the methods the author or translator employs to achieve his or her aims.[55] The purpose of the *Tianzhu shiyi* was primarily persuasive: in the work, Ricci argues for a Christian-Confucian complementarity that rejects certain Buddhist and Daoist influences. To do so required that he negotiate the complex intersections of the belief systems not only on the ideological level, but also on the linguistic level, for many terms had currency in one or more of these traditions.

In his article, "Translating Worlds: Incommensurability and Problems of Existence in Seventeenth-Century China," [56] Roger Hart describes four strategies the Jesuit missionaries in China, and Ricci in particular, employed to cope with such complex linguistic and ideological terrains. The four are transliteration, use of loan translations, selective omission, and semantic extension. Each strategy, Hart writes, presents its own opportunities as well as restrictions.

Transliteration involves creating neologisms for foreign terms out of "semantically neutral" but phonetically similar words which already exist in the target language. Precisely

[55] Bassnett and Lefevere, "Introduction," *Constructing Cultures*, 4.
[56] Roger Hart, "Translating Worlds: Incommensurability and Problems of Existence in Seventeenth-Century China," *Positions* 7.1 (1999), 111-13.

because this approach introduces a new term, the translator is free to define it without needing to reject any existing connotations. By the same token, however, she often must include lengthy explanations in order to convey the word's meaning. Moreover, neologisms are, by definition, novel additions to the target language, and their foreignness may hinder (or help) their reception.

Notably, Ricci broke with the precedent of Jesuits in Japan of transliterating theological terms. Initially, the Japanese missionaries, under Francis Xavier, used the word *Dainichi* (literally, "Great Sun") to denote the Christian God, not realizing that it was also the name of a Buddhist deity used by one Buddhist tradition in Japan. Confusion over this and similar terms immediately arose, and as a result, Xavier created neologisms for nearly all religious words. "God" became *Daiusu*, a phonetic approximation of the Latin *Deus* or Portuguese *Dios*.[57]

Ricci transliterates many words and proper names, but, in contrast to his predecessors in Japan, he rarely does so when it comes to theological terms. One prominent example occurs early in the *Tianzhu shiyi*. Here, he posits that there must be "Someone" who governs the natural world, and that "this Someone is none other than the Lord of Heaven [*Tianzhu*] whom our Western nations term *Deus* [*Dousi*[58]]."[59] This is the only point in the work where Ricci transliterates a European word for God. Even in this instance, the phonetic equivalent does not stand on its own; it is presented in relation to the existing Chinese term *Tianzhu*.

Whereas transliteration creates phonetic neologisms, loan translations create semantic neologisms by combining terms already used in the target language. These allow translators to introduce innovative concepts that readers can grasp, at least to some degree, without having seen a particular combination of words before. In the *Tianzhu shiyi,* for example, Ricci merged

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[57] Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 77-86.
[58] Ricci's creation of this neologism is curious: the first character is not typically used in transliteration, nor does it semantically correspond to any attribute associated with the divine. There is no entry for *Dousi* in current dictionaries of classical Chinese, suggesting that the term was not widely accepted.
[59] Ricci, *TZSY*, 71.

ling (alert, quick, intelligent) and *cai* (ability, endowment) to communicate the Western word "intellect."[60] Other examples are his words for the three types of souls of scholastic philosophy: vegetative soul (*shenghun*), sentient soul (*quehun*), and intellectual soul (*linghun*).[61]

A third strategy in relation to translation is the selective omission of ideas or connotations that may hinder the reception of a particular work. One will recall that Ricci discusses particular Christian principles and tenets such as Jesuit celibacy, Jesus as the son of God, and baptism only in the final chapter of the *Tianzhu shiyi*. Conspicuously absent from this section are mention of the crucifixion of Jesus and monogamy as a prerequisite for receiving baptism. That a father, particularly the "Great Father" (*Dafu*),[62] not only allowed but willed that his son be killed so shamefully would no doubt have incurred immediate objections from Confucian scholars as a breach of one of the five Cardinal Relationships. Likewise, many literati had concubines and may not have been as receptive to the work had Ricci stated that God requires his followers to limit sexual relations to one partner.[63] In these instances, it is clear that selective omission is a strategy that makes the text more palatable to the receiving audience.

The final strategy that Ricci employs in the *Tianzhu shiyi* is semantic extension, the "borrowing and redefining" of terms already in use. For the most important theological terms, Ricci employed words belonging to the Buddhist and Confucian traditions. For example, he used *tiantang*, a Buddhist equivalent of the Sanskrit *devaloka* ("mansions of the gods") for Heaven.[64] For "holy," "sacred," and "saint," he used the Confucian honorific *sheng*. While this term is

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[60] *Ibid*., 68, n. 11.
[61] These three terms designating types of souls are still used today. See *ibid*., 144, n. 8.
[62] *Ibid*., 130.
[63] The issue of monogamy was a strong deterrent to receiving baptism for many literati throughout the China mission. A later Jesuit missionary writes, "One of the obstacles to the conversion of the Chinese is the multitude of wives, at least in the homes of people of quality, […]. The missionaries allow their converts to marry one of their concubines in cases where the legitimate wife refuses to become a Christian, but that is a marriage that is forbidden by the laws of the country." Qtd. in Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, 190.
[64] Hart, "Translating Worlds," 112; Lancashire and Hu, "Introduction," 35.

associated with a degree of reverence, it is closer in meaning to the word "sage." Ricci labels Augustine a "Sage from the West,"[65] perhaps equating the important Christian intellectual with previous men of outstanding character in the Confucian tradition.

The best example of this semantic extension is Ricci's choice of words to designate "God." As we have seen, a principal term was *Tianzhu* from the Buddhist tradition which Ruggieri had originally employed. In the *Tianzhu shiyi*, Ricci uses not only *Tianzhu*, but also two new words originally derived from the Confucian tradition: *Shangdi* or *Di* (Sovereign on High) and *Tian* (Heaven). The former term appears in some of the earliest Chinese writings and referred to a divine ancestor who presided over the affairs of lesser spirits and the natural world. During the Zhou Dynasty (1122-221 BC), use of *Shangdi* declined, as it was associated with ancestors of the preceding royal family. Concurrently, *Tian*, which had, for some time, had a meaning similar to *Shangdi*, took on the connotation of an impersonal force. For Ricci, these two terms provided evidence that the Chinese of antiquity worshipped a singular, omnipotent deity corresponding to the Christian God. He uses *Shangdi* to convey the personal nature of God and *Tian* to express the idea of Providence. [66]

The significance of Ricci's use of these terms for God, particularly those from the Confucian tradition, lies not in his ability to find "equivalent" or even similar terms in previous Chinese thought, but rather in how these linguistic selections contributed to the broader goal of presenting Christianity and Confucianism as complements. After the two interlocutors in the *Tianzhu shiyi* establish that a God (designated by the general *Tianzhu*) exists and that he created all things, the Western scholar then explicitly and simultaneously links this God with the God of

[65] Ricci, *TZSY*, 91.
[66] Lancashire and Hu, "Introduction," *TZSY*, 33-34.

the West (that is, Deus) and with the *Shangdi* of Confucianism while rejecting the idea that he should be equated with certain Daoist deities. He declares,

> He who is called the Lord of Heaven in my humble country is He who is called *Shang-ti* [*Shangdi*] (Sovereign on High) in Chinese. He is not, however, the same as the carved image of the Taoist Jade Emperor who is described as the Supreme Lord of the Black Pavilions of Heaven, for he was no more than a recluse on Wu-tang mountain. Since he was a man, how could he have been the Sovereign of Heaven and Earth? Our Lord of Heaven is the Sovereign on High mentioned in the ancient [Chinese] canonical writings.[67]

Immediately following these assertions, he quotes from eleven Confucian passages containing a reference to *Shangdi* before concluding, "[Therefore], having leafed through a great number of ancient books, it is quite clear to me that the Sovereign on High and the Lord of Heaven are different only in name."[68] This is perhaps the most overt instance of cultural accommodation through the use of specific linguistic terms in this work. Here, Ricci unmistakably equates the God of Christianity with Shang divine being(s). That late-Ming scholars did not regard the term *Shangdi* as connoting a personal, singular God was not problematic for Ricci; rather, he saw an opportunity to restore to them a knowledge they had lost and, in the process, hybridize Confucianism and Christianity.

It is significant that of the four translation strategies that Hart presents – transliteration, loan translations, selective omission, and semantic extension – Ricci uses the last most frequently to communicate important theological concepts.[69] Because semantic extension provides opportunities to redefine and re-present terms already in use, it is a natural choice for Ricci, who aimed to establish a common historical link between Confucian and Christian traditions. It is clear from the previous example that methods of linguistic translation have

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[67] Ricci, *TZSY*, 121-23.
[68] *Ibid., 125.*
[69] Hart, "Translating Worlds," 112.

ramifications that go beyond the limits of mere word substitution; in fact, linguistic translation can be understood as part of a larger project of cultural translation.

More broadly, Ricci interpreted and shaped Chinese beliefs, whether related to Confucianism or history, in such a way that they appeared to be complementary to Christianity. He infuses Western events into his account of certain aspects of Chinese history and explains specific phrases from the Confucian canon in such a way that they can be more readily reconciled with Christianity. He even recasts ancient writings in a hierarchical way such that texts that pose fewer challenges to Christian tenets are "purer" and more reliable than those that do not.

In keeping with his aims to embrace Confucianism and reject Buddhism, Ricci creates a historical narrative that merges European figures and beliefs with those of China. As we have seen, in the *Tianzhu shiyi*, he equates *Shangdi* with the Christian God and uses ancient Chinese texts to support the claim that both Europeans and Chinese once worshipped the same divine being. He further merges the two histories to explain how Buddhist belief developed and entered China. For example, Ricci claims that the Buddhist belief in reincarnation originated in the teachings of Pythagoras. After Pythagoras died, his teachings spread to other nations. Ricci writes, "This was at a time when Sakyamuni happened to be planning to establish a new religion in India. He accepted this theory of reincarnation and added to it the teaching concerning the Six Directions, together with a hundred other lies, editing it all to form books which he called canonical writings [scriptures]."[70] This passage reveals Ricci's ignorance of the development of Buddhism in India. However, it is significant that he amalgamates "false teachings" of Buddhism with those from the West by proposing that there was an encounter between Indian and Greek antiquity.

[70] Ricci, *TZSY*, 241.

Perhaps more important is Ricci's account of Buddhism's introduction into China. According to Chinese tradition, Emperor Ming (58-75 AD) of the Han Dynasty dreamed of a golden figure. After waking, he sent ambassadors to search for this being, which they equated with Buddha. They traveled to India and, upon their return, are said to have introduced Buddhist teaching into China. In the *Tianzhu shiyi*, Ricci draws on this tradition, but argues that Emperor Ming sent ambassadors in search of Christianity because he had heard of the miracles and exemplary life of Jesus. The ambassadors simply did not travel far enough West and mistakenly returned with Buddhist scriptures.[71] Such assertions further fuse Chinese and European historical events and understandings about the development of religious systems.

In addition to creating a history of interlinked Eurasian religions, Ricci actively (re)presents Confucian writings in a manner more consistent with Christian or Western belief. In this way, he presents himself as one who is especially concerned with discovering the true (that is, original) meaning of Confucianism. Instances of this reinterpretation occur most frequently when ideological dissonance between Christian and Chinese belief arises. For example, the notion that "man is an organic unity with all things in the world"[72] presents particular problems for the Western scholar in the *Tianzhu shiyi* for whom distinctions between man and nature, spiritual and earthly, and rational and instinctual are necessary. When the Chinese scholar asks, "Why is it that the *Doctrine of the Mean* lists 'identifying oneself with [the welfare of] the whole body of officers' among the nine standards by which the empire should be governed?" Ricci's Western scholar responds,

> I have nothing against the expression "to identify with the body of things" if it is used in its figurative sense; but if you use it in its literal sense, *you will be doing great violence to the meaning of the passage*. The *Doctrine of the Mean* wants the ruler to sympathize with his ministers, implying that ruler and ministers belong to the same

[71] *Ibid*., 453-55; n. 15.
[72] *Ibid*., 225.

> category. Can grass and tress, tiles and stones all be said to feel sympathy? I have heard it said that the superior man must show care but not humanity in his dealings with non-intelligent things. To cause unintelligent things to become one body with men is to insist that everything be treated with humanity.[73]

In this instance, Ricci argues against principles that are incompatible with Christianity by appealing directly to Confucian writings. In the process, he claims that what is at stake is misunderstanding the very meaning of core Confucian texts.

Occasionally, however, a problematic statement is so explicit in Chinese writings that simple textual reinterpretation does not suffice; rather, the entire body of writings must be reevaluated on the whole. In response to the Jesuit practice of celibacy, the Chinese scholar in the *Tianzhu shiyi* asks his counterpart to explain a Chinese quotation that says that to produce no offspring is the greatest breach of filial piety. The Western scholar replies that the statement comes from Mencius (372-289 BC), not "the Sage" (that is, Confucius). "It may be," he says, "that he [Mencius] received a faulty statement in the [oral] transmission [of the Sage's teachings], or perhaps […] that others employed deliberately misleading terminology."[74] Most Chinese, particularly the Neo-Confucians, generally accepted Mencius' writings as orthodox, so this passage in the *Tianzhu shiyi* appears to deliberately recast Confucian writings in a hierarchy in which older writings and those associated with Confucius himself are more reliable and venerable. Later Jesuits would pick up on this elevation of Confucius and his writings as the foremost authority and icon of Confucianism and, subsequently, China,[75] though it is only slightly perceptible in Ricci's writings.

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[73] *Ibid*., 233. Emphasis added.
[74] *Ibid*., 429.
[75] See, for example, "Chapter 2: There and Back Again: The Jesuits and their Texts in China and Europe" in Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 77-133.

Finally, to explain why ancient Chinese sources mention God but not concepts such as heaven and hell, Ricci posits that these ideas were originally part of the Chinese tradition but had not been transmitted properly. He writes,

> The teaching handed down from the sages was geared to what people were capable of accepting; thus, there are many teachings which, though handed down for generations, are incomplete. Then there are teachings which were given direct to students and which were not recorded in books or, if recorded, were subsequently lost. There is also the possibility that later, perverse historians removed parts of these records because they did not believe in their historical veracity. Moreover, written records are frequently subject to alteration, and one cannot say that because there is no written record certain things did not happen.[76]

While this may seem to be a particularly defensive or weak argument to the modern reader, it would have resonated with literati during Ricci's time who were well aware that many ancient texts were either incomplete or no longer extant. Native readers would have picked up on the subtle allusion to the book burning during the Qin dynasty.[77] Implicit in Ricci's argument is that he holds the key to the knowledge that was lost.

By evaluating Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* as a work of translation, one can see that not only are there multiple strategies to translate words or phrases, but in fact each strategy offers different opportunities to construct meaning. Ricci's use of semantic extension, for example, allowed him to redefine Buddhist and Confucian terms, a feat that exposes the link between linguistic translation and cultural translation. Finally, it shows the ways in which Ricci intertwined Confucian and Western history as part of the broader goal of accommodation.

[76] Ricci, *TZSY*, 329.
[77] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 164.

The Precariousness of Accommodation: Reactions to the Tianzhu shiyi

By portraying Confucianism and Christianity as not only compatible but also complementary, Ricci rendered the divisions between the two systems of thought ambiguous. An examination of reactions to the work, both European and Chinese, shows the precariousness of Ricci's semi-hybridization. Indeed, on either "side" of the exchange, there was no singular view of Ricci's accommodative efforts in the *Tianzhu shiyi*.

Initial reactions from Ricci's superiors to his written dialogue were positive. When he had finished his first draft in 1596, he sent a version translated into Latin to Macao. There, the Bishop of Japan, the current leader of the mission in China, and Valignano all examined the work, making minor suggestions before sending it back to Ricci in 1598.[78] In 1604, Ricci sent a copy of the first edition of the work in Chinese to Father General Claudio Aquaviva (1543-1615) along with his introduction, a translation in Latin of a preface by a notable scholar-official, Feng Yingjing (1555-1606), and a Latin summary of the eight chapters that compose the *Tianzhu shiyi*.[79] All of these Jesuit superiors generally approved of Ricci's portrayal of Christian principles and Confucianism. However, it must be noted that they likely were not aware of the nuances of specific Chinese terminology.

As more Jesuit missionaries entered China, disputes arose not over the practice of accommodation on the whole, but rather the use of specific Chinese terms and the Chinese custom of venerating one's ancestors. Irrespective of their stance regarding Ricci's methods, Jesuits continued to dress as literati and esteem Confucian principles. His opponents argued that Ricci drew too strong a parallel between Christianity and Confucianism so that the Chinese audience had trouble distinguishing between the two.

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[78] Lancashire and Hu, "Introdudction," *TZSY*, 15. Ricci, however, did not receive the draft until 1601 because de Sande had become ill.
[79] *Ibid*., 19.

Central to the debate was the use of *Shangdi*, *Tian* and even *Tianzhu* (though especially the first two) for the Christian God. The first complaint came just a year after Ricci's death from the Visitor of the Japanese and Chinese missions, Francesco Pasio (1554-1612). Once sparked, the disagreement continued and came to a head at the Chiating (Jiading) Conference in December 1627 through January 1628. Prominent pro-Riccian Jesuits in this first generation after Ricci were Alvaro Semedo (1585-1658) and Alfonso Vagnoni (1566-1640), both of whom echoed Ricci's rationale for using *Shangdi* and *Tian*. In contrast, Nicolo Longobardi (1565-1654) and Joao Rodrigues (1558-1633)[80] argued that the terms were not compatible with Christianity because their contemporary use had been strongly influenced by Neo-Confucianism. Notably, both sides consulted Chinese Christians' opinions only cursorily. The Jesuits at the conference failed to come to any conclusion.[81]

Unresolved disagreements over the degree of accommodation continued throughout the seventeenth century, eventually culminating in an official dispute known as the Rites Controversy. In 1704, Pope Clement XI issued an edict preventing the missionaries in China from using *Shangdi* and *Tian* as names for the Christian God. Publications of the *Tianzhu shiyi* after the edict replaced these terms with *Tianzhu.* Clement further prohibited Chinese Christians from honoring Confucius and their ancestors, [82] a practice that Ricci had argued was purely

[80] Notably, Rodrigues and several other opponents of Ricci's accommodation were associated with the Japanese mission, in which Jesuits presented themselves as Buddhists, not Confucians, and created new terminology for Christian terms instead of using words already present in native vernaculars.
[81] Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 166-183. Kim presents a detailed account of treatises written about the early terms controversy.
[82] David Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 61. For a full discussion of the Rites Controversy, see Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning*, (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1994).

civic.[83] The debate over the Chinese name for God continues even today: Protestants use *Shangdi*, while Catholics use *Tianzhu*. Modern translators still disagree over the best term.[84]

The Chinese response to Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*, and, more generally, Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism was just as varied. Many literati esteemed the work for its literary style.[85] Further, it not only enabled Ricci to engage in dialogue with the Chinese but also encouraged mutual respect and esteem. Some high-ranking officials became friends and converts, and they played an important role in fostering imperial support for the Jesuits. At the same time, fierce debates arose among the Chinese about the benefits and dangers Ricci's depiction of Christianity.

Several scholar-officials were drawn to Christianity because of the *Tianzhu shiyi*, among them "Paul" Xu Guangqi (1562-1633), the most illustrious of Chinese converts during the early seventeenth century. A day after reading a hand-written copy of Ricci's text in 1603, he asked to be baptized.[86] Xu became an important friend of Ricci and ally of the mission, writing rebuttals to nearly every attack against Christianity.[87] He also played a large role in helping the Jesuits gain access to the court and reform the Chinese calendar.[88]

In addition, he debated those Jesuits who did not approve of Ricci's Chinese names for God. However, he supported the use of *Shangdi* not because he believed the *Shangdi* in Chinese texts was commensurate with the Christian God, but rather because he thought such an equation would attract more literati interest in Ricci's teachings.[89] At the same time, Xu strongly promoted the view that Christianity, as Ricci presented it, could enhance Confucian

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[83] Ricci-Trigault, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, 96-97.
[84] Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 195-96.
[85] See, for example, Li Zhizao's preface to the third edition in Wang-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, cited below.
[86] Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 218.
[87] George S. Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 224.
[88] *Ibid.*, 220.
[89] Kim, *Strange Names of God*, 222-23.

understanding. He writes that the missionaries "are truly disciples of the (Confucian) sages. Their doctrines are completely orthodox. […] The doctrine about serving Heaven which is propagated by the Western officials (missionaries) can truly benefit the imperial influence, be of assistance to the Confucian learning, and correct the way of the *Buddha*."[90] Here, it is clear that Xu supported Ricci's presentation of the complementarity of Confucianism and Christianity.

Another influential convert, Li Zhizao (1565-1630), also espoused this view. In his preface to the third edition of the *Tianzhu shiyi* (1607), notably written before he converted to Christianity, he praises Ricci's morality, careful study of Chinese texts, and devotion to teaching "sound doctrine." That Ricci's text fostered a good deal of respect between Jesuits and Chinese is evident in Li's conclusion:

> The mind and heart of man are the same in East and West, and reason is the same. What differs is only speech and writing. When this book appeared it was written in the same language as ours, refined and civilized, and thus could serve to open the mind for instruction. Since the purpose of the book was to promote peace and wellbeing, to espouse sound doctrine and improve morals, it is certainly no trifling piece, nothing to be taken lightly or to be put in the same class as the works of earlier philosophers.[91]

This passage is telling because Li, a scholar-official, wrote it before he entered the church. It shows that even non-Christian scholar-officials esteemed Ricci's work. Indeed, the *Tianzhu shiyi* supposedly influenced the Kangxi Emperor to issue his Edict of Toleration of 1692, nearly a century after the text was first published.[92]

At the same time, however, many Chinese did not agree with the claims put forth in Ricci's treatise. His ideas contradicted some of the Neo-Confucian interpretations established

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[90] Qtd. in Kim, 225.
[91] Li Zhizao, "Preface to the True Meaning of God," *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Wing-tsit Chan, (Princeton, 1963), 627-29.
[92] Lancashire and Hu, "Introduction," *TZSY*, 39. Interestingly, after Pope Clement XI's ruling during the Rites Controversy, Kangxi withdrew his support of Christians, calling them "petty." The text of his decrees are available in Dan J. Li, trans., *China in Transition, 1517-1911*, 22.

during the Song Dynasty (960-1279) that explained topics ranging from the structure of the material world to human nature. Those most opposed to the missionaries were young scholars who had recently passed the imperial exams. They reacted vehemently to any belief system, Christian or otherwise, that they perceived endangered Song Neo-Confucian principles. On these grounds, in 1616, a recently appointed vice-president of the Board of Rites in Nanjing, Shen Que (1565-1624), filed an official complaint and requested the missionaries be put to death. This recommendation was not completely fulfilled, but persecution, both legal and physical, continued in the area for several years, despite the efforts of their friends in the courts.[93]

Although violence and official measures against the Jesuits were sporadic, there was a continual literary debate among learned Chinese about the claims of Ricci and other Jesuits. Many asserted that Ricci did not understand Confucianism and that his ideas were unorthodox. For example, a certain Li Suiqiu (1602-47) suggested that Christian teachings were destructive to Confucianism. He wrote,

> Ignorant people believe that the recent doctrine of the Master of Heaven is close to our Confucianism, but that is a serious mistake. If one examines what it is that Confucianism calls Heaven from the point of view of heavenly phenomena as well as from that of social relations and the organisational principle for all beings, one realises that there is a definite difference [from the teaching of the Barbarians]. How could there possibly be in Heaven a man presiding there like the one they call Master of Heaven? … If one has a correct understanding of what the Heaven of Confucianism is, one must reject totally the Western concept of the Master of Heaven. If not, one will end up by no longer understanding the meaning of respect for Heaven (*jing tian*).[94]

Here, Li Suiqiu presents an argument antithetical to that of pro-Ricci Chinese: Christianity is not only incompatible with Confucianism, but a complementary understanding of the two threatens the civil order that is based upon a proper relationship between humans and Heaven.

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[93] For a full discussion of this period of opposition, see Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 128-160.
[94] Qtd. in Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact*, 197. Gernet's work is a valuable resource of primary materials written by Chinese against the Christian mission and, in particular, their interpretation of Chinese thought.

Clearly, there was no uniform opinion regarding Ricci's portrayal of Christianity and Confucianism. The chief concern of Europeans was the distinctiveness of Christianity in Ricci's presentation. In other words, even if there was a degree of accommodation, it was important that the Chinese recognize some kind of difference between Christianity and Confucianism. Without this distinctiveness, there could be no conversion. Conversely, the Chinese debate was most concerned with the degree to which Christian belief would harm the understanding of Confucian principles. Even Chinese Christians such as Xu Guangqi, whose primary goal was propagating his new faith, argued that a complementary understanding of Confucianism and Christianity was beneficial to both belief systems. The range of opinions, both European and Chinese, suggests that Ricci succeeded in blending aspects of Confucian and Christian teaching.

Still, modern scholars disagree about Ricci's understanding of Confucianism and, thus, how useful and successful his accommodation was. One of the most prominent scholars skeptical of Ricci's methods is French historian Jacques Gernet. In his book, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures*, he argues that Ricci did not fully understand the rich tradition of Confucianism and so constructed only superficial links between it and Christianity. As evidence, he draws attention to the fact that Ricci used terms with Buddhist and Neo-Confucian connotations to communicate Christian principles, suggesting that his selections were both uninformed and indiscriminate.[95] As further evidence, he presents a multitude of Chinese primary sources in which the authors strongly argue that Ricci misinterpreted and even corrupted Confucian teachings.

On a larger, philosophical scale, Gernet asserts that it was impossible for the Jesuits to bridge ideological differences because the Chinese language and European languages are based on different mental frameworks. The Jesuits had difficulty rendering abstract ideas such as the

[95] *Ibid*., 50.

opposition of "substance" to "accident," a fundamental distinction in scholastic philosophy. For example, the absence of a copula hindered their ability to communicate the notions of existence.[96] He states,

> To express the notions of substance and accident which were vital in proving the Christian truths and without which the missionaries considered it to be impossible to think correctly, Matteo Ricci had been obliged to resort to circumlocutions, translating substances as 'that which is established of itself' (*zilizhe*) and accident as 'that which depends upon something else' (*yilaizhe*). From the Chinese point of view the distinction was gratuitous and artificial since in their language nothing of the kind was suggested.[97]

In other words, dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity was necessarily limited because the linguistic frameworks of the languages were too dissimilar. Here, then, arises the issue of the incommensurability of translation.

Gernet's arguments can be quite compelling, particularly those which document Chinese opposition to the Jesuits in primary sources. However, Gernet is quick to dismiss evidence that Ricci's work fostered dialogue and respect between Europeans and Chinese. For example, he posits that Xu Guangqi did not genuinely convert to Christianity,[98] but this claim is difficult to maintain, since Xu renounced his concubine upon conversion. Further, the mere fact that there was debate among both Christians and Chinese suggests that Ricci did, in fact, successfully link Christianity and Confucianism – perhaps too well. All of the primary source evidence that Gernet presents actually undermines his claims. That so many literati wrote treatises against Ricci's interpretation shows the degree to which he engaged them on an intellectual level and that, in fact, he entered the commentary tradition. Indeed, one might argue that there was so

[96] *Ibid*., 239-243. Hart refutes Gernet's claims about the lack of a copula in Chinese in "Translating Worlds," 99-105.
[97] *Ibid*., 243.
[98] *Ibid*., 110-111.

much textual opposition because Ricci's arguments were convincing and therefore perceived as a threat to the Neo-Confucian basis of civil service.

Moreover, the fact that Ricci employed Buddhist and Neo-Confucian terms as well as (ancient) Confucian terms does not necessarily imply that he was ignorant of their connotations. Even though Ricci might not have been familiar with all nuances of various Chinese beliefs, he arguably knew enough so that his use of Buddhist and Neo-Confucian terms was not entirely accidental. As Roger Hart points out, using such terms allowed Ricci and subsequent Jesuits to recast them in a Christian framework. By redefining the concepts, the Jesuits were claiming that Christian ideas could correct and supplant the misleading influence of Buddhism.[99]

On the issue of linguistic commensurability, Gernet is also too pessimistic. To claim that true communication could not take place on account of a hypothesized fundamental imbalance between Chinese and European languages reduces the Jesuit-Chinese encounter – and, indeed, any such cross-cultural encounter – to a simple hierarchical binary in which differences can never be bridged. Against this claim of incommensurability, Hart posits that the issue was one of correlation, or finding appropriate ways in which to discuss new concepts in the Chinese language.[100] Understanding the problem as one of correlation instead of incommensurability acknowledges the difficulty of translation while allowing for the possibility of genuine dialogue. Indeed, the influence of Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* on many of the Chinese and both the debates and dialogue that it inspired suggest that Ricci created a space between "China" and "Europe" in which communication could take place.

Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* is an important object of study not only because it was the first widely read Christian treatise written in Chinese, but also precisely because of all these

[99] Hart, "Translating Worlds," 113.
[100] *Ibid*., 102.

debates surrounding it, both during Ricci's time and today. Examining these issues reveals the complexity of cultural encounters and, in particular, the specific practice of translation.

Clearly, Matteo Ricci, as linguistic and cultural translator in late-Ming China was not a passive intermediary. Ricci's dual status both as a resident in China and member of the Jesuit order both shaped his text, for it was necessary that it appeal to the Chinese and retain the approval of his Jesuit superiors and the Vatican. Ricci's specific aims – not just to introduce Christian thought to China, but the particular strategy of native restoration that he adopted – also affected the ways in which he crafted his text.

Translators always have choices to make in order to best negotiate their particular situation. Each choice has its own constraints and opportunities. Ricci chose to employ terms that already existed in the Chinese language. By selecting *Shangdi* and *Tian*, for example, he used their previous connotations to his advantage and actively recast them in Christian terms. That these words sparked so much debate among those in China and in the Vatican shows just how influential and transformative a translator's linguistic choices can be.

Further, the *Tianzhu shiyi* highlights the potential power of cultural translation. Although we tend to think of China and Europe as distinct entities, Ricci actively emphasized and even created points of similarity between the two, both in terms of ideological principles and historical narrative. In so doing, he not only blurred the line between them but also created something innovative and dynamic "in-between," at the site of Bhabha's "third space." By speaking of Christianity in Confucian terms, he fostered significant respect and dialogue among the missionaries and Chinese, showing that cultural translation is a significant factor in enabling productive inter-cultural encounters.

Finally, Ricci's text and the modern scholarly debates surrounding his achievement bring up the question of incommensurability. It is important because if two languages are so different that they prevent deep understanding, then any attempt to bridge them – whether through translation or otherwise – will ultimately be fruitless and each person will be isolated with others from his or her own language group. The example of Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*, however, suggests that translation is able not only to facilitate communication and understanding across linguistic boundaries, but also to cause it to flourish. Indeed, the very fact that Ricci's text continued to be published well into the twentieth century and that it is so often discussed in scholarly writings is evidence that the its influence transcends not just language bounds but also temporal ones.

III. RETURN: THE *CONFUCIUS SINARUM PHILOSOPHUS* AS AN EXTENSION OF RICCI'S ACCOMMODATION

More than eighty years after the first edition of Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* was published in Beijing, a Latin translation of three of the Confucian *Four Books* was published in Paris. Entitled *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687),[101] its content clearly draws upon Ricci's accommodative efforts. However, there are several important differences between the two works. Ricci composed his *Tianzhu shiyi* largely on his own, with some help from Chinese literati friends. He wrote directly in the Chinese language for a Chinese audience, although his text still needed to be approved by Jesuit superiors before it could be published. In contrast, the *Confucius Sinarum*

[101] *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis latine exposita studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdtrich, Francisci Rougemont, Philippi Couplet, Patrum Societatis Jesu* (Paris: David Horthemels, 1687).

Philosophus was the result of the collective effort of many Jesuits. Much of the text is translation proper, from Chinese to Latin. Finally, the work reflects changes in the politics of translation in Europe during the seventeenth century. The Jesuits who worked on the text published it not at the suggestion of the Pope or Visitor, but rather under King Louis XIV's commission to gather more information about China and its culture. Numerical superscripts in some of the Latin translation correspond to Chinese characters in the source text, suggesting that its primary editor, Philippe Couplet (1622-1693), intended to publish a bilingual Latin-Chinese edition. This implies that the practice of translation in late-seventeenth century Europe was conceptualized as a verbatim agreement between source text and product.

The content of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* includes a dedication to Louis XIV, a Preliminary Discourse, a biography and engraving of Confucius, translations of the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Analects of Confucius*, and a chronology of Chinese dynastic history. It was the first comprehensive presentation of Confucianism in Europe and was accessible to anyone learned. At the time of its publication in the late seventeenth century, the work amplified an interest among Europeans in all things Chinese that was already in vogue. Although the text itself may today only be well-known to scholars of Chinese history or mission studies, nevertheless it has significantly contributed to the modern conception of "China" and "Confucianism."

The *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* can be understood as a culmination of Jesuit accommodation espoused by Matteo Ricci.[102] In a direct sense, the work is a descendent of Ricci's Latin translation of the *Four Books* that he composed from 1591 to 1594. Because it proved useful as a language primer for new Jesuits entering China, Ricci's translation was passed

[102] This is the claim of David E. Mungello in "The Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Translation Project of the Confucian *Four Books*," *East Meets West*, 253-272. See also Mungello, *Curious Land*.

down from teacher to student for decades. Each generation could amend the text as the missionaries became attuned to nuances of Confucian thought and of the Chinese language. In 1662, the Jesuits published a Latin translation of the *Da xue* (Doctrine of the Mean) and part of the *Lun yu* (Analects) titled *Sapienta Sinica*. A Chinese-Latin edition of the *Zhong yong* (Doctrine of the Mean) followed a few years later.[103] Both were published in China and listed many Jesuit collaborators, most of whom had worked on both texts. Although the title page of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* lists four contributors, Prosper Intorcetta (1625-1696), Christian Herdtrich (1625-1684), Francois de Rougemont (1624-1676), and Philippe Couplet, a total of seventeen Jesuits worked directly with this particular edition of the text.[104] The number of collaborators is much higher if one includes everyone who contributed to the translation of the *Four Books* since Ricci first rendered them in Latin.[105]

Perhaps the name most associated with the work is Philippe Couplet, for he not only wrote part of the supplemental materials and helped edit the entire work, but he also oversaw its publication in Europe. Born in Belgium in 1622, he first arrived in China in 1656 and worked in several provinces. He was most active in the Jiangnan region, where he collaborated with Xu Guangqi's granddaughter, Kandidi (Candida) (1607-1680). In 1680, he was appointed procurator to Europe, a title which entailed gaining support for and fostering interest in mission activities among European scholars and influential people.[106]

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[103] Entitled *Sinarum scientia politico-moralis*, half was published in 1667 and the other half in 1669. See Mungello, "The Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Translation Project of the Confucian *Four Books*," 259.
[104] Mungello, *Curious Land*, 252.
[105] One claims that 116 Jesuits contributed to the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, though exact roles are unclear. See *ibid*., 257, n. 33.
[106] *Ibid*., 253-57.

It was during his extended tour of Europe,[107] beginning in 1682, that Couplet oversaw the publication of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. Such tours were important tools for fostering interest and support for mission activities; in fact, we may even regard this expedition as a kind of book tour. Couplet took along with him a celebrated convert and candidate for priesthood, Michael Shen Fuzong (ca. 1658-1692), in addition to Chinese jewelry and numerous missionary works in Chinese. He and Shen traveled throughout Europe and gained an audience with Pope Innocent XI, King Louis XIV, and William III of England. Although European interest in China preceded the tour of Couplet and Shen, their visit with Louis XIV in September 1684 seems to have directly influenced his support of the Jesuit mission: by the end of the year, he had written a letter commissioning five French Jesuits to travel to China and bring back ethnographic information.[108] Couplet saw to the publication of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* in 1687, but he was not to set foot on Chinese soil again: he died during a storm on his return voyage to China in 1693.

The *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* is an extension of Ricci's work not only because it is a descendant of his translation of the *Four Books*, but also because the authors continue his accommodative approach to Chinese history and culture. In the *Proemialis Declaratio* (Preliminary Discourse), Couplet describes the *Tianzhu shiyi*[109] and reports that it was influential among the Chinese.[110] He further maintains the equation of *Shangdi* (*xam-ti*) and *Tian* (*tien*) with

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[107] For a detailed account of the tour, see Theodore Nicholas Foss, "The European Sojourn of Philippe Couplet and Michael Shen Fuzong, 1683-1692," *Philippe Couplet, S.J.(1623-1693): The Man Who Brought China to Europe,* ed. by Jerome Heyndrickx, (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1990), 121-140.
[108] Henri Auguste Omont, ed. *Missions Archéologiques Françaises en Orient aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles,* (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1902), 806.
[109] He refers to it as *Tien-hio xe-y* (*Tienxue shiyi*), or "True Meaning of Heavenly Teachings," which may have been an early name for the work. See Claudia von Collani, "Philippe Couplet's Missionary Attitude toward the Chinese in *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*," *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623-1693): The Man Who Brought China to Europe*. Ed. by Jerome Heyndrickx, Monumenta Serica Monograph Ser. No. 22, (Nettetal: Steyler-Verlag, 1990), 53, n.68.
[110] Couplet, LXVI. See also von Collani, 53.

the Christian God (*Deus*),[111] a textual practice that characterizes the entire *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. Moreover, Couplet and the other contributors to the work carry forward the notion that the ancient Chinese were civilized and worshipped God, and that it was Daoism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism that eventually led them into atheism. Whereas Ricci directly equated Confucius and Chinese antiquity with the glorious (though, regretfully, pagan) Greek and Roman civilizations only in a few writings, the collaborators of the Latin translation make the analogy explicitly clear to their European audience repeatedly. Chinese history is contextualized within Western, or more accurately, Biblical history. In these ways, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* can be seen as a redoubling of Ricci's cultural accommodation methods back to Europe.

Solidifying the Connection: Aspects of Translation

As was the case with the *Tianzhu shiyi*, the term "translation" does not adequately describe the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. Although the work includes translation proper, to label it a translation is too limiting. Indeed, of 412 total pages, the translations of the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Analects*, presented together under the heading *Scientiae Sinicae* (Learning of the Chinese), compose only two thirds, and many of these pages are devoted to introductions and in-text commentary. The work as a whole comprises the following: Couplet's dedication to Louis XIV; the *Proemialis Declaratio*, a 106-page introduction to the entire work bearing Couplet's signature; a brief biography of Confucius, accompanied by an engraved portrait of the sage; the *Scientiae Sinicae* (translations); Couplet's *Tabula Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae* (Chronological Chart of Chinese Monarchs), dated 1686; Couplet's map of China; a short list of Chinese demographic statistics; and, finally, a single-page *Privilege du Roy*. All of these supplemental materials, including the portrait of Confucius and in-

[111] Couplet, XCI.

text commentary, are not typically regarded as part of the practice of translation; nevertheless, they work as one with translation proper to shape the overall message of the entire work.

An analysis of the translation of the *Great Learning* shows how the Jesuit collaborators promoted Ricci's Christian-Confucian synthesis through translation proper. [112] Considered to have originally been part of the *Li zhi* (Book of Rites), its date of composition is a source of debate. Traditionally, Confucius' disciple Zengzi (ca. 505-436 BC) and his grandson Kong Zhi (ca. 483-402 BC) are said to have transmitted or composed the work, but some modern scholars have argued that it may not have been written until the Former Han period (206-8 BC). It was only in the Song dynasty that Zhu Xi codified the *Great Learning* along with the *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects*, and the *Mencius* into the *Four Books*. [113] The text itself promotes self-cultivation as the primary means to maintain harmony as an individual in one's family, and throughout a ruler's entire empire. It draws on ancient texts and kings as precedents of such moral development.

Entitled *Magna Scientia*, the Latin translation of the *Great Learning* in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* is thirty-nine pages long. Divided into chapters, paragraphs, and sentences, each section keeps to a similar pattern: first is a general statement summarizing the contents of the section, followed by the translation from the Chinese, an explanation of the text, and a concluding statement. Where the translators felt it necessary, they presented historical or cultural background in italics.

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[112] For this analysis, I referred to Andrew Plaks' English translation of the *Da Xue* and to secondary sources such as Mungello. I am also indebted Dr. Patricia A. Sieber, Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the Ohio State University, for providing insight into connotations of particular terms and phrases in the Chinese text.
[113] Xinzhong Yao, "Preface," Ta Hsueh *and* Chung Yung *(The Highest Order of Cultivation* and *On the Practice of the Mean)*, Trans. by Andrew Plaks, (New York: Penguin, 2003), vii-ix.

In his analysis of the *Magna Scientia*,[114] David E. Mungello asserts that the Jesuits were fairly accurate in their portrayal of the general principles of the *Great Learning*. Indeed, most sections, particularly those in the second half, seem to correspond well to the content of the original. However, there is a distinct trace of Christian or Western interpretation in the translation of some terms. Mungello writes that these changes "were usually reasonable elaborations on the Chinese text."[115] Although they may seem insignificant, such embellishments are nevertheless important to our discussion for two reasons. They not only highlight the strategies the Jesuits used to negotiate difficulty in translating certain Confucian ideas, but also show how those strategies fit into the overall tactic of cultural accommodation.

An important concept in the Confucian tradition is *junzi*, denoting a man who excels in moral and spiritual cultivation, learning, and service to the people. To translate this term, the Jesuits employed a variety of Latin words. These include *perfectus vir* (perfected man),[116] *bonus Princeps* (preeminent ruler),[117] *Rex bonus* (virtuous king),[118] *probus Rex* (virtuous king),[119] or some combination of the above. Collectively, these terms captured the general sense of *junzi*. *Perfectus*, for example, communicates the notion of personal cultivation or improvement, while *Rex* or *Princeps* connotes the public servant aspect of *junzi*.[120]

Other concepts, however, appear to be deliberately rationalized in the Latin version. An example is the translation of *mingde*, often rendered in English as "illuminated virtue." In the *Magna Scientia*, the Jesuits used *rationalem naturam* (rational nature), or some variation on the terms. Recasting *mingde* in this overly intellectual light seems intentional, because at least in one

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[114] Mungello, *Curious Land*, 277-83.
[115] *Ibid*., 283.
[116] *Magna Scientia*, 2, 33.
[117] *Ibid*., 18.
[118] *Ibid*., 19.
[119] *Ibid*., 20.
[120] See Mungello's discussion of these terms in *Curious Land*, 277. He also cites additional Latin combinations in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*.

instance, they present a better translation only to immediately qualify it in rational terms. They write, "*sublimen virtutem, sive rationalem naturam*" (sublime virtue, that is, rational nature).[121] Following the numerical superscripts, *sublimen virtutem* is the actual translation, and it is quite close to the concept of *mingde*. The explanatory phrase, which does not correspond to Chinese text, shows that the Jesuits were actively shaping these Confucian concepts for their audience.

A second concept that the translators over-rationalized is *xin*, or heart-mind. This they rendered as *animus*, the intellect. They write that the cultivation of one's virtue consists of ordering one's mind, and that this mind, in contrast to the passions, is the guide and master of the entire physical body (*siquidem animus est totius corporis Rector ac Dominus*).[122] Favoring rationality over emotions ignores the interplay between the two, an important relationship in Chinese psychology.[123] The overly-intellectual translation *xin* as well as *mingde* is no doubt linked to the influence of Aristotelian thought on Jesuit training and scholarship in Europe. In keeping with their accommodation approach, the Jesuits here may be attempting to draw oblique parallels between Confucian writings on morality and those of the Greeks.

Finally, the translators of the *Magna Scientia* translated some concepts by using distinctly Christian terms. The word *ren* in the Confucian tradition means "human kindness," "benevolence," or "humanity." In Chinese, it is phonetically identical to the word for "man" or "human," and so has a second connotation of being innate in humankind. In the *Magna Scientia*, the Jesuits rendered this *pietate & clementia* (piety and mercy).[124] Again, this choice seems deliberate, for there exists in Latin a suitable word lacking the religious undertones: *humanitas*,

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[121] *Magna Scientia*, 7. See also Mungello, *Curious Land*, 279.
[122] *Magna Scientia*, 15.
[123] See Qiong Zhang, "Demystifying *Qi*: The Politics of Cultural Translation and Interpretation in the Early Jesuit Mission to China," *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, Ed. by Lydia H. Liu, (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999), 80.
[124] *Magna Scientia*, 20; Mungello, *Curious Land*, 278.

meaning "kindness," "refinement," or "humanity." A second term, *yi* (righteousness), became the more Christian *fidelitatem* (faithfulness).[125] In light of these alterations, it is perhaps not surprising that the translators' epilogue to the work states that the people should reckon true profit to be found in fairness, love, mercy, and faith (*aequitate, amore, clementia, fide*).[126] Translating the Confucian concepts of *ren* and *yi* in such religious terms allowed the Jesuits to implicitly argue that they had found evidence of Christian morals in the ancient Chinese texts.

While these specific aspects of translation contributed a great deal to the Jesuits' cultural interpretation of Confucianism, the italicized commentaries they include in the *Magna Scientia* more explicitly link ancient Chinese civilization with the Greeks and Romans. The collaborators characterize Chinese rulers of the past as upright men who worshipped God. At the same time, they reject Neo-Confucian interpretations of the texts when it becomes necessary.

A telling example of Jesuit cultural interpretation in their commentaries is found in the fourth section of the *Great Learning*. The opening sentence reads, "The Master has stated: 'As a judge hearing litigation, one should put oneself in the place of others.'"[127] This mention of litigation prompts a lengthy discourse on the court system of Chinese antiquity. The Jesuits esteem its five modes of investigating persons accused of crimes: evaluating their words (*cu-tim; verborum*), appearance (*se-tim*; *vultus*), breathing (*ki-tim*; *respirationis*), ability to listen (*ulh-tim*; *aurium*), and eyes (*mo-tim*; *oculorum*). This orderly system the translators label *Sinarum Areopagus*, or Chinese Areopagus. The Areopagus was the criminal law court in ancient Athens. The Jesuits are quick to point out, however, that the seventeenth-century Chinese have a disorderly legal system because they no longer follow these practices, either because they do not

[125] Mungello, *Curious Land*, 278.
[126] *Magna Scientia*, 38.
[127] Andrew Plaks, trans., Ta Hsueh *and* Chung Yung *(The Highest Order of Cultivation* and *On the Practice of the Mean*), 9.

know about them or because they deliberately reject them (*sed haec hodie aut ignorantur, aut negligentur*).[128] This passage is significant not only because the Jesuit translators describe a kind of Chinese Golden Age, but also because they clearly equate ancient China with ancient Greece.

In another commentary section, the Jesuits link legendary (though, at the time, regarded as historical) Chinese monarchs to the Christian God and two of the *Four Books*. They detail the lives and morals of two good rulers, Yao and Shun, and two depraved rulers, Jie and Zhou. Yao, they write, served Heaven (*Caelo*) and came to the aid of the needy. In fact, he led such a moral life that "he is said to have first established the doctrine [contained in] the *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean* from his own example, [for] he himself became the prototype and precedent for all subsequent rulers."[129] By claiming to reveal instances of reverence for God in the Chinese tradition and linking that worship to the *Great Learning*, they elevate the source material of their translation project to a near-divine status.

While the translation project of the *Great Learning* provided many opportunities to interpret the Chinese text and history favorably, there were also points where the collaborators felt it necessary to refute arguments that did not fit within their accommodation framework. Most of the fifth section of the Chinese text, for example, was no longer extant by the Song dynasty. As a result, Zhu Xi wrote what he thought it might have said, and this commentary was accepted as an orthodox part of the *Great Learning*. However, the Jesuits disagreed with Zhu's emphasis on the material world. Consequently, they omit altogether the text of his commentary and insert their own, in which they say that the original text was lost, probably during the Qin book burning. The current blemishes (*menda*) in the text may have been inserted by scribes or

[128] *Magna Scientia*, 13.
[129] *Ibid*., 21. The Latin reads, *Doctrinam* Ta-hio & Chum-yum *primus dicitur exemplo suo instituisse, factus ipse omnium posterorum sequentiumque Imperatorum prototypon & exemplar*.

typographers; the text itself is certainly not at fault.[130] Here, the use of selective omission and careful historical commentary allows the Jesuits to maintain their assertion of the source's purity.

Thus far we have observed how specific linguistic translation strategies and in-text commentary form the general message of the *Magna Scientia*. However, translation proper is only one segment of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. The supplemental materials also play a significant role in shaping the text. Even a brief examination of the *Proemialis Declaratio*, *Tabula Chronologica,* and portrait of Confucius shows that Couplet and the other contributors systematically construct a singular image of China and Confucius that was simultaneously rooted in a Christian historical framework and exotic enough to arouse interest in Europe.

The *Proemialis Declaratio* is one place in which Couplet explicitly promotes Ricci's cultural accommodation and centers China's history squarely within a European conceptual timeline. In order to explain how it was possible that the Chinese maintained knowledge of God while other civilizations faltered, he tells the story of Noah's flood. At that time, scholars thought that Noah had transmitted special knowledge of God to his sons after the deluge. One son, Ham first corrupted this knowledge, but descendents of another, Shem, held onto it much longer. As part of Shem's line, the Chinese were able to preserve their knowledge of God on a large scale, whereas in other nations, only exceptional individuals, such as Plato, Cicero, and Seneca, were able to do so.[131] After the dispersion of the tongues described in the book of Genesis, the Chinese language developed independently.[132]

In addition, Couplet builds upon Ricci's accommodation practices in several important ways. Just as Ricci claimed that Buddhism, Daoism, and Neo-Confucianism had corrupted China's original knowledge of God, so too Couplet describes the "sects" as pernicious,

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[130] *Ibid*., 13.
[131] Couplet, LXXV-LXXVII.
[132] *Ibid*., LXXXIX.

particularly the Neo-Confucians. He goes on to say that the *Shangdi* and *Tian* found in ancient Chinese texts are evidence of residual belief in God and that they had been misused relatively little.[133] Employing a native term for God is permissible, he writes, because even in Greece and Rome, missionaries did not use the Hebrew name, but rather terms existing in the languages already: *theos* and *Deus*, respectively. Saint Thomas Aquinas also advocated using native names for God.[134] This is a notable extension of Ricci's accommodation, for although Ricci employed native names to designate God, he did not justify it by invoking translation practices used in the Greek and Roman missions.

Similarly, in his *Tabula Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae,* Couplet intertwines Chinese and Western history much more explicitly than Ricci had done decades before. By the mid-seventeenth century, there was much European interest in dating ancient history and, in particular, biblical events such as the creation of the world and Noah's flood. In 1650, Anglican Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1565) published his *Annales veteris testamenti, a prima mundi origine deducti* (Annals of the Old Testament, deduced from the first origins of the world), a chronology based on the Vulgate. This proposed 4004 BC as the year of creation and 2349 BC for the flood. Ussher's chronology was widely and enthusiastically accepted in Europe.[135]

A few years later, Jesuit Martino Martini (1614-1661), a missionary in China, produced a second chronology based on Chinese annals, recorded in sixty-year cycles, entitled *Sinicae Historiae Decas Prima* (1658). This set the reign of (mythical) emperor Fu Xi in 2952 BC as the starting point of Chinese history. However, according to the biblical account, all humans after the flood descended from Noah. The beginning date of Martini's chronology clearly suggests

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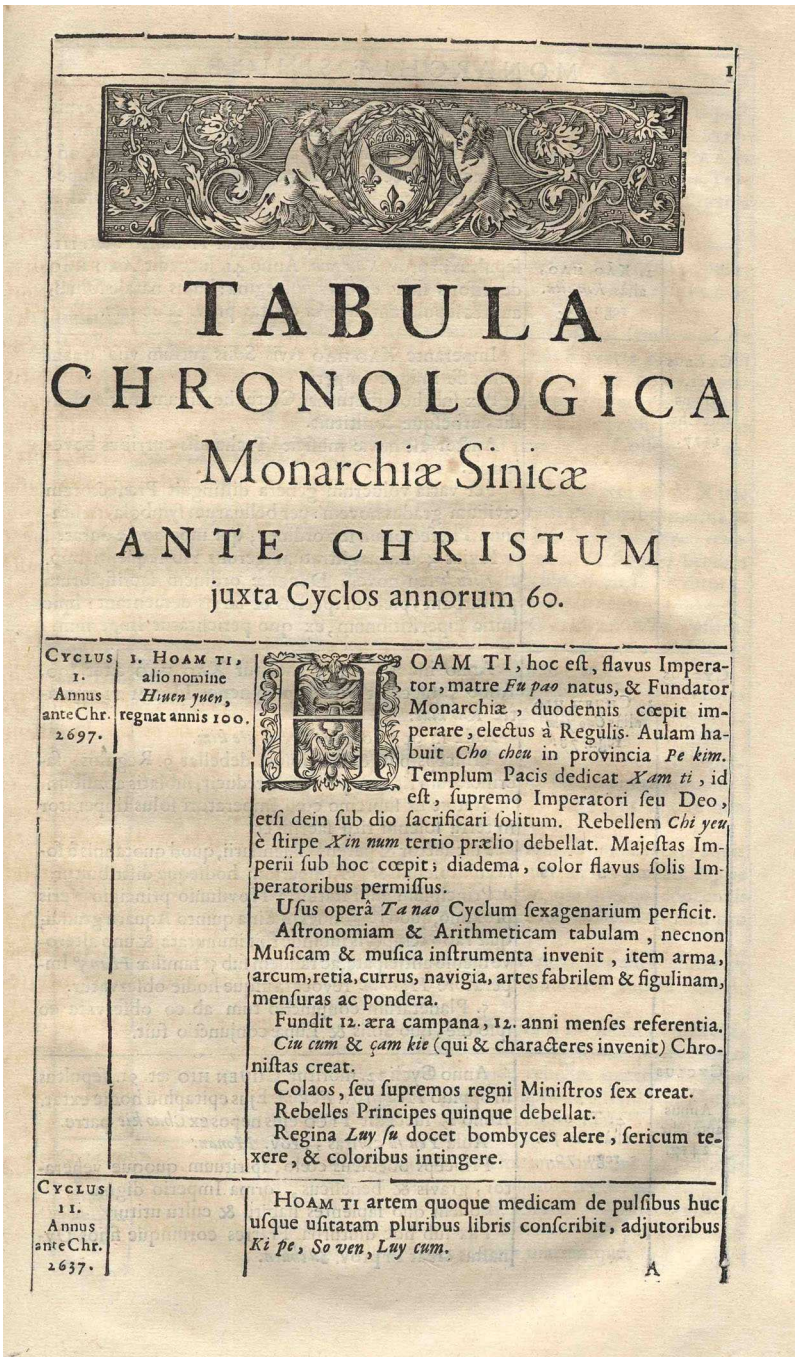
[133] *Ibid*., XCI.
[134] *Ibid*., XCVIII, LXXXIX. See also von Collani, "Philippe Couplet's Missionary Attitude," 52.
[135] Mungello, "A Study of the Prefaces to Ph. Couplet's *Tabula Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae* (1686)," *Philippe Couplet, S.J. (1623-1693): The Man Who Brought China to Europe*, 192.

that Chinese civilization pre-dates the flood, challenging the European timeline. Not surprisingly, this incited a great deal of debate in Europe, with the result that Jesuits and other Europeans favored a new chronology based on the Septuagint instead of on the Vulgate. This gave dates of 5200 BC and 2957 BC for creation and the universal flood, respectively. The adjustment placed the beginning of Fu Xi's reign after the flood.[136]

Couplet's *Tabula Chronologica* picks up where Martini's reckoning, which was only partially complete, left off. This work, with its charts and prefaces, was the first full account of Chinese dynastic history (up to 1683) published in Europe.[137] In the first preface, Couplet establishes Chinese origins at 2952 BC and the beginning of the sixty-year cycles at 2697 BC with the reign of the Yellow Emperor, Huangdi. The visual layout of the *Tabula Chronologica* contains two charts, one from 2697 BC to 1 AD [see Figure 1], and another from 1 AD to 1683. It is significant that Couplet not only dates Chinese accounts by using the European system (that is, one centered on the birth of Christ), but also presents European and Chinese histories in two parallel columns. In other words, he visually links the two traditions together into one universal conception of history. For this reason, we can understand Couplet's *Tabula Chronologica* as a progression of the intertwined historical accounts that Ricci had proposed nearly eighty years before.

A final supplement to the translations proper in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* is the engraved portrait of Confucius, "Cum Fu Cu [Kong Fuzi] sive Confucius" [Figure 2]. The first published artistic rendering of Confucius in Europe, it greatly influenced European conceptions of Confucius. Lionel M. Jensen, in *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization*, asserts that the portrait was a deliberate attempt to create the European

[136] *Ibid*., 185, 192.
[137] *Ibid*., 197.



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TABULA CHRONOLOGICA Monarchiæ Sinicæ ANTE CHRISTUM

juxta Cyclos annorum 60.

CYCLUS I. Annus ante Chr. 2697.

I. HOAM TI, alio nomine *Hiuen yuen*, regnat annis 100.

HOAM TI, hoc eſt, flavus Imperator, matre *Fu pao* natus, & Fundator Monarchiæ, duodennis cœpit imperare, electus à Regulis. Aulam habuit *Cho cheu* in provincia *Pe kim*. Templum Pacis dedicat *Xam ti*, id eſt, ſupremo Imperatori ſeu Deo, etſi dein ſub dio ſacrificari ſolitum. Rebellem *Chi yeu* è ſtirpe *Xin num* tertio prælio debellat. Majeſtas Imperii ſub hoc cœpit; diadema, color flavus ſolis Imperatoribus permiſſus.

Uſus operâ *Ta nao* Cyclum ſexagenarium perficit.

Aſtronomiam & Arithmeticam tabulam, necnon Muſicam & muſica inſtrumenta invenit, item arma, arcum, retia, currus, navigia, artes fabrilem & figulinam, menſuras ac pondera.

Fundit 12. æra campana, 12. anni menſes referentia.

Ciu cum & *çam kie* (qui & characteres invenit) Chroniſtas creat.

Colaos, ſeu ſupremos regni Miniſtros ſex creat.

Rebelles Principes quinque debellat.

Regina *Luy ſu* docet bombyces alere, ſericum texere, & coloribus intingere.

CYCLUS II. Annus ante Chr. 2637.

HOAM TI artem quoque medicam de pulſibus huc uſque uſitatam pluribus libris conſcribit, adjutoribus *Ki pe*, *So ven*, *Luy cum*.

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FIGURE 1

The first page of Philippe Couplet's chart of history from 2697 BC to 1 AD in the *Tabula Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae*. The 126-page *Tabula Chronologica* followed the translation of three of the Confucian *Four Books* in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. The parallel columns with European dates on the left and Chinese events on the right bring the two together in a singular history. Also note the reference to *Shangdi* in the first paragraph: *Templum Pacis dedicat* Xam ti, *id est, supreme Imperatori seu Deo* ("He [Huangdi] dedicates the Temple of Peace to *Shangdi*, that is, the supreme Commander, or God").

(Photograph courtesy of The Rare Books & Manuscripts Library of The Ohio State University Libraries)

perception that Confucius was a culture hero among the Chinese and that this iconic Confucius (and, by extension, Confucianism) formed the fundamental core of Chinese civilization.[138]

The conventions of the engraving draw upon a particular genre of portraiture popular during the seventeenth century. In this style, a famous figure is portrayed in the foreground of a room amidst objects associated with him or her. The portrait of Confucius takes as its background the hall of a Confucian temple with its arches enshrining the sage. However, the fact that shelves of books fill the walls and that the structure is labeled *Gymnasium Imperii* (Imperial Academy) encourage an association with a secular center of learning, such as a library. This simultaneously esteemed Confucius as a great teacher, who, like Plato in Europe, was revered by his countrymen for promoting exceptional ethics and learning, and suggested that Confucian temples and the rites associated with them should be regarded more as civic rituals than as religious ones.[139] Later European representations of Confucius all drew upon the engraving in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* as a model.[140]

In these ways, both the translation proper and supplemental materials of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* shape the work's overall message and reveal a systematic extension and elaboration of Ricci's links between Chinese and European traditions. In the *Magna Scientia,* the Jesuit translators presented particular Confucian concepts in language with Aristotelian or Christian overtones. Their in-text commentary put forward "objective" evidence of Chinese history and customs, often in a way that encouraged their European audience to equate ancient Chinese civilization with laudable peoples of Western antiquity. This theme continues

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[138] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 81-82. He is particularly interested in the creation of the Latin neologism "Confucius" from Kong Fuzi, which was not, in fact, a common name for Confucius among the Chinese, but rather a "Jesuit fiction" of the seventeenth century (p. 86). Chinese texts refer to the sage by various names, including "Kongzi," "Fuzi," "Zhongni," and "Kong Qiu." The compound "Kong Fuzi" is particularly honorific; by employing it, the Jesuits gave the sage much greater importance as a figure than he actually held in Chinese thought. See Jensen's discussion of source materials and the evolution of the Latin transliteration, pp. 81-96.
[139] Mungello, *Curious Land*, 272-77.
[140] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 82.

FIGURE 2

The portrait of Confucius, “Cum Fu Cu sive Confucius,” an engraving by an unknown artist published in *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*. The image draws upon both Jesuit conceptions of Confucius as well as conventions of seventeenth-century European portraiture. As a large figure fore-grounded in a scholastic “Imperial Academy,” Confucius is here presented as a preeminent icon of Chinese ethical and scholastic learning. (Photograph courtesy of The Rare Books & Manuscripts Library of The Ohio State University Libraries.)

throughout the other supplemental materials in the text. In the *Proemialis Declaratio,* Couplet and his collaborators explain not only that the ancient Chinese served the Christian God, but also how it happened that they retained such knowledge while other cultures lost it. In addition, the hybridization of Chinese and Western historical accounts is made visually clear in the *Tabula Chronologica*. Finally, the portrait of Confucius elevates Confucius and Confucianism as representations of the pinnacle of Chinese ethical achievement. As a result, the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* argues that Confucianism and Christianity, or China and Europe, are joined by both common history and ethical principles, and further, that the similarities between the two result not from chance, but rather from a distinct, traceable genealogy.

Ethnographic Interest: Reactions to the Work

The *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was one of the last scholarly presentations of Jesuit accommodation in seventeenth-century Europe.[141] Because there was during this time so much interest in non-Western cultures generally, and Asian culture in particular, the work would likely have been published even if Louis XIV had not commissioned it.[142] After its initial publication in 1687, versions in other languages followed. Still, scholarly reactions were mixed, perhaps because of the increasing debates in Europe over the practice of accommodation leading up to the Rites Controversy.

After the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was printed in Paris, European scholars summarized and reviewed it in numerous journals. Of the Confucian concept of *ren* (humanity), an unnamed reviewer in wrote in the *Journal des savants* of 1688,

> I do not see in regard to the present theme, that the charity of the Chinese would be different from that of the Christians; so much is it true that God has spread in the

[141] Mungello, *Curious Land*, 297.
[142] *Ibid*., 287.

> souls of the infidels the same lights which lead us to virtue which, insofar as the exterior of action is concerned, they are not at all different from Christian virtues.[143]

The writer also says that Confucius was a great moral teacher, and that his ideas are the foundation of civil service in seventeenth-century China. These comments suggest that Couplet and the other Jesuit collaborators succeeded in conveying to their audience that Chinese and Christian traditions were interlinked.

Other reviewers, however, were not as sympathetic. In the same year, a certain Protestant, Jean Le Clerc, published an extensive review in the *Bibliotheque universalle et historique*. In it, he questions whether Europeans could be convinced that the Chinese custom of honoring Confucius and one's ancestors were purely civic. He also suggests that the term *Tian* might not refer to the Christian God, but rather some other kind of divinity. These criticisms are remarkably similar to those raised during the Rites Controversy. Finally, he implies that the Jesuits who worked on the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* may have purposefully distorted events in Chinese history so that they were more easily reconcilable with European traditions. These criticisms, however, were much milder than those that would follow in the eighteenth century.[144]

European scholars' mixed and increasingly critical reactions to Jesuit accommodationist writings may have been linked to the change in attitude among the scientific community. The widespread publication of travel literature beginning in the mid-seventeenth century roused interest in the ethnographic value of texts from foreign lands. Indeed, it is because of this attention that Couplet and the others include so much ethnography in their text. [145] However, it appears that several of the critics took issue with the fact that the translators include explanatory

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[143] Qtd. in *ibid*., 290.
[144] *Ibid*., 291-93.
[145] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 119.

commentary in the text without setting it apart. In the *Magna Scientia*, of course, this was not a problem because the numerical superscripts designated which sentences followed from the original Chinese. However, in the translation of the *Zhong yong* and most of the *Lun yu*, translation and explanatory phrases were indistinguishable from one another.[146] The scholarly community may have seen this as interfering with the original text.[147]

As scholarly interest in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was declining, it was growing among lay readers throughout Europe. Following its original publication, two abridged versions were reproduced in vernacular tongues: in French, *La Morale de Confucius, Philosophe de la Chine* (Amsterdam, 1688), and in English, *The Morals of Confucius, a Chinese Philosopher* (London, 1691). Of these popular incarnations, Jensen writes, "Not only did such books satisfy and further whet the curiosity of Europeans about China, but they functioned as guides, collections of inspiration to which one could turn when necessary."[148] In contrast to scholarly readers who were concerned with the politics of representation and Jesuit accommodation, this lay audience was more interested in the Jesuit's work because it could apply to their personal lives.

The *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* is an interesting counterpoint to Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*, for although they both draw upon the same religious tradition and practice of accommodation, the final presentation of each is quite unique. This is because, despite their similarities, the respective translators were attempting to achieve distinct goals. The European audience in the late seventeenth century was largely interested in ethnographic works. Some of

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[146] Interestingly, Mungello points out that interweaving commentary and source text was part of the Confucian commentary tradition in which readers were familiar enough with the original text that they would easily be able to identify added explanations. In Europe, however, writers typically off-set commentary in a different sized font (*Curious Land*, 296). Perhaps we might consider the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* as a intertwining distinct writing conventions as well.

[147] *Ibid.*

[148] Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, 120.

them, Louis XIV for example, specifically commissioned certain Jesuits to gather and consolidate foreign works. This is a very explicit example of how translators' attention to the desires of their target audience can have a profound impact on the creation of the text.

In addition, our analysis of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* argues for a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes translation. The three of the *Four Books* that compose the body of the work are the only portions that can be considered translation proper, and even they challenge that label. As we saw in our discussion of the *Magna Scientia*, even though explanatory phrases and commentary do not correspond with text in the original source, nevertheless, they form an important part of the final presentation. In fact, certain readers may not even pick up on the fact that such materials are not drawn from the original.

Further, supplemental materials such as introductions and photographs are necessarily bound up with issues of translation. In the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, the contributors explicitly interwove Chinese and Christian traditions in the *Proemialis Declaratio* and *Tabula Chronologica.* The portrait of Confucius presented the sage as more of a culture hero than he was. In some ways, these additional parts are more interesting than the translation proper itself. Indeed, scholars who have written on the work devote more of their arguments to the supplemental materials, particularly to the *Proemialis Declaratio*, than to the translation. While introductions, prefaces, appendices, and photographs in most works do not typically arouse so much scrutiny in comparison with the translation proper, nevertheless, this example shows that a translation is not easily, if ever, dissociated from the complete package of materials alongside which it is presented.

IV: CONCLUSION

The Jesuits were neither the first nor the last Christians to enter China, but their encounter with the Chinese during the mid-sixteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries is remarkable because it enabled such a degree of intellectual exchange between Europeans and Chinese. Compared to Jesuit missions in other parts of the world at the time, as well as to Chinese missions established by other orders, their exchange was unique. Although conversion to Christianity was never widespread, nevertheless, remnants of the seventeenth-century Jesuit-Chinese exchange still exist: for example, Li Madou, as Ricci was known among his contemporary Chinese, continues to be a known figure in modern China, and the portrait of Confucius from the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* has had a lasting effect on many current depictions of the sage.

Since its formation in 1540, the Society of Jesus aimed to carry the message of Christianity to the rest of the world. Within a few decades, the Jesuits established missions in the Americas and Asia, as well as in parts of Africa.[149] Although marked by a great deal of diversity, Jesuits in all of these places during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries generally valued learning, set up schools, and made some attempt to learn the indigenous languages of the communities with whom they interacted. In many areas, remnants of an earlier Jesuit presence can still be seen, for example, in art and architecture. Still, there is no evidence of a textual and intellectual exchange elsewhere to the degree that there was among Jesuits and Chinese literati. There are several possible reasons for this. In Latin America and the Philippines, the Jesuits viewed the indigenous peoples as less civilized than Europeans and generally argued against establishing a native clergy.[150] Further, these regions were mission sites for other Christian orders as well for Jesuits, and often European nations claimed them as their own territories,

[149] For a general overview of Jesuit mission history, see William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972).
[150] *Ibid*., 171-74.

either for conquest or trade. In fact, it was disagreements among Europeans, much less between native populations and missionaries, that led to the decline of these missions.[151]

The Jesuit mission in Japan closest resembles the China encounter, but there too, the degree of exchange was not as great as it was in China. Under Valignano, whose approach greatly influenced the one adopted in China, the Jesuits conversed with elites and promoted education. Valignano espoused cultural accommodation to Buddhism and wrote a catechism in Japanese.[152] He even promoted a tour of four young Japanese converts throughout Europe in 1588, nearly one hundred years before Shen Fuzong's tour.[153] However, Japanese studies scholar George Elison writes that, although the Jesuits transported much information about Japan to Europe, "[s]een in strict terms, the sum of their cultural contribution to Japan was nil."[154] This is perhaps an overstatement, but it nevertheless draws attention to the fact that Jesuits in Japan and China found themselves in distinct circumstances and employed differing approaches. Jesuits did publish many works as they did in China, but these texts did not reach a wide audience.[155] A major (though not sole) factor in the Japanese-Jesuit encounter was the troubled relationship between missionaries and Japanese political powers. Seen as insurgent, the Jesuits, as a number of Buddhist sects, underwent considerable persecution.[156]

Even in comparison to other mission groups in China, the Jesuits were more successful in engaging the Chinese. The most significant orders besides the Jesuits were Dominicans and Franciscans, but neither was able to establish a mission in China before the 1630s, nearly fifty years after Ruggieri and Ricci first entered the kingdom. One reason why the Dominicans seem

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[151] *Ibid*., 272.
[152] George Elison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 37.
[153] *Ibid.*, 133.
[154] *Ibid*., 248.
[155] *Ibid*., 248.
[156] *Ibid.*, 252.

to have had trouble retaining dialogue with the Chinese was that they opposed the Jesuit stance on Chinese rites and viewed the Chinese as pagans. Although the Franciscans did not take as strong a stance on the issue, they collaborated with the Dominicans in initiating the formal complaints against Jesuit accommodation during the early stages of the Rites Controversy. In addition, both typically focused their proselytizing efforts among the poorer and uneducated classes, though some Franciscans served at the Chinese court in the early eighteenth century. Both orders produced scholarly writings, but these were more for a European academic audience.[157]

There are several reasons why dialogue flourished as it did between Chinese and Jesuits in the seventeenth century. It must be noted that the conversation took place almost entirely between elites: both Chinese literati and European Jesuits were highly educated and were generally supported by authorities in their respective native societies. The relatively open intellectual climate of the late Ming Dynasty, the period during which the first Jesuits arrived, no doubt allowed for more freedom of discussion. Further, the Chinese were very interested in non-religious knowledge that the Jesuits brought with them, most notably that of astronomy. The widespread woodblock printing technology in China meant that writings, both by Jesuits and literati, could be produced and circulated relatively inexpensively. This allowed a large audience to read and respond to Jesuit writings. An increasing European interest in Asian cultures throughout the seventeenth century secured European financial and intellectual support for their projects.

A significant factor, and perhaps the Jesuits' most admirable quality, was their genuine attempt to appreciate and engage (elite) Chinese culture. Whether or not their attempt to convert China to Christianity was successful, they immersed themselves in the society. Learning the

[157] Nicolas Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. 1: 635-1900*, (Boston: Brill, 2001), 322-335.

language and reading Chinese texts were two primary tasks every Jesuit undertook upon his arrival at the mission. Particularly those Jesuits associated most with Ricci and his approach portrayed Chinese culture sympathetically in their writings and letters, though of course they were not completely free of bias. It is this sensitivity that we can most appreciate in this encounter.

Still, our study here is only a glimpse into the exchange between China and Europe in the seventeenth century. More study is needed of the effects of European policies, particularly changing politics within the Church, on the Jesuits' approach to missions and writings. Similarly, a comparative analysis of Jesuits and other orders or of the various national identities of missionaries in China would further highlight the dynamics of this encounter. Fruitful studies might also examine the changing intellectual climate in China as the Qing Dynasty replaced the Ming. Finally, rooting an analysis of Jesuit texts within a discussion of printing technology in seventeenth-century China would elucidate the relationship between Jesuit texts and their influence.

Translation was, as Roger Hart puts it, "not an obstacle to dialogue but a *crucial resource*" for the Jesuits in seventeenth-century China.[158] Indeed, translation is often an important component engaging another culture in an exchange of ideas. As the "performative nature of cultural communication," a translation involves an interchange between audience and players. As such, it is reinstated again and again in changing social contexts, calling back to mind André Lefevere's notion of "rewriting."

Translators, as "rewriters," occupy a space similar to what Bhabha designates as the "in-between" of an [intellectual] migrant. Yet in many ways, the position of translators is more precarious than that of Bhabha's migrant. The Jesuit case is an explicit example, since the

[158] Hart, "Translating Worlds," 117. Emphasis added.

missionaries in China had to constantly negotiate multiple levels of authority in both China and Europe or face expulsion. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that "precarious" does not mean "powerless." As we have seen, both Ricci and the contributors to the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* took certain risks and employed specific translation strategies to shape their translated texts for their respective audiences. Similar to the position of Bhabha's migrant, as we mentioned, it is in the third space of translation that "new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration" are initiated.

In addition, an examination of the *Tianzhu shiyi* and *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* corroborates Lefevere's claims that "rewriting" is a dynamic process and that its production and reception are affected by numerous cultural and personal factors. In the case of the Jesuits, a partial list of these factors includes the author's relationship to authority (favor of Vatican, European patrons, local elites, Chinese emperor); the expectations of the receiving audience, including censors by whom the text must be approved prior to publication; material conditions of publishing (printing technology, funding, and circulation); the constraints and opportunities provided by the languages themselves; and the style and personality of individual translators. As the term "rewriting" implies, translation is neither a static process of copying a source text nor an act completely free of limitations.

Finally, our examination of the two Jesuit missionary writings argues for a broader understanding of what constitutes "translation." Ricci's dialogue, *Tianzhu shiyi*, does not fit the traditional description because it has no explicit source text, however it involves both linguistic and cultural translation: Ricci rewrote specific words and concepts in such a way as to make Christianity seem compatible with Confucianism as part of his accommodation strategy. On the other hand, the translation of the Four Books in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* does

constitute translation proper, but it is equally important to understand that all supplemental items, including prefaces, commentary, and visual materials, are part of the translation, even though they do not necessarily amount to *linguistic* translation. To fail to evaluate either the *Tianzhu shiyi* or the supplements included in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* under the rubric of translation theory because neither corresponds to the traditional definition would severely limit our understanding of Jesuit writings and approach to the China mission.

Bassnett and Lefevere write, "Translation is in history, always. It is, in many cases, a vital factor within history."[159] As a result, examining instances of translation can enlighten studies of both historical encounters and the broader issue of cross-cultural communication and understanding. The engagement between Jesuit missionaries and Chinese intellectuals during the seventeenth century is but one instance of such a meeting, but it insists that we reconsider the nature of exchanges between a Self and an Other. In fact, as we have seen, neither of the Jesuit texts in this study can be said to be the work of one individual, or even of one group. The Jesuits collaborated not only with each other, but also with their superiors, Chinese Buddhists, Christian converts, and Confucian scholars. Additionally, they were undeniably influenced by their immersion in various layers of both European and Chinese culture. As a result, Edward Said's depiction of the relationship between East and West as one in which the latter speaks for and often misrepresents the former does not hold in this situation. The seventeenth-century Jesuit-Chinese encounter disrupts the notions that binaries fundamentally exist not only between "original" and "copy" in the act of translation, but also between a singular "East" and "West," or, indeed, between any two groups engaged in cross-cultural communication.

[159] Bassnett and Lefevere, "Introduction," *Constructing Cultures*, 6.

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